



OLYMPIA ADVOCACY DAY

2019

SODA NEWSLETTER
ADVOCACY BY CHRIS BRANDT

Hello everyone, this is Chris Brandt the Director of Government Affairs for At Work!

Before I got my new job, I was the “boss” for 17 years.

At Work! supports people to get good jobs
with good companies that pay fairly and give people a chance to learn new things and grow.

Some of you have a job coach from At Work! or other agencies.

We support people to get connected and make relationships with people
who have the same interests.

I have been fighting for equity and justice for 50 years now!

I started as a Special Ed Teacher in Port Alberni on Vancouver Island.

Now I am working on getting good laws and enough resources from governments so people can live

A fair and good life.



MISSION: is Core Members to be active in the community, Most notably the world of work and allies will lift each other up in mutual support.

SODA News Flash
#71
March 2023

President Biden asked me to serve as an Ability One Commissioner in August of 2021.

Ability One is a federal contract program that creates jobs by employing people to do work the government needs. Across the country 42,000 people work on Ability One jobs.

With my fellow Commissioners we made a new rule last October that companies cannot pay people with disabilities less than minimum wage on any Ability One contracts.

We are working on more good policies so that all employees have equal rights.

So, what's happening in Olympia?

The legislature is in its 50th day of session (2/28/23) and the session ends on April 23rd.

There is still plenty of time to make your voices heard. The best way to advocate is to know your own Representatives (two) and your Senator (one).

Here is the link to the Washington State Legislature Webpage.

You can find your representatives and senator here: <https://leg.wa.gov/>

There are many ways to contact your legislators. You can use the hotline to call on the telephone.

The Hotline number is **1-800-562-6000**. You also can call their office and give a message to their aide.

You can use the Legislative webpage to make your opinion on things known to your legislators.

You can sign in pro (for) or con (against) bills that impact you and the services you receive.

I think the easiest way to do that is by signing up for Advocacy Alerts for the Arc of Washington.

They work really hard with many self-advocates, service providers like At Work! families, and people who care about our issues. Here is the link to the Arc's Advocacy Page. <https://arcwa.org/advocacy/>

They also have a bill tracker that is updated weekly.

It has a happy or frown face to let you know which bills are good for us and which are not.

Looking at a book means studying the issue.

At Work! is a member of the Community Employment Alliance (CEA).

We are working hard to get more pay for providers like At Work!

because we haven't had a raise in 11 years.

At Work! And other providers in the state cannot take any new people.
We want to pay our job coaches a fair wage, serve more students coming out of high school,
And offer more services to everyone again. We don't want people to keep getting a new
Job coach all of the time.

CEA is following these bills right now:

HB1541- Nothing About Us Without Us- This bill makes sure that people with lived experiences are at the table when decisions are made about them. People with disabilities will be included in making important decisions. Ivanova Smith, Activist Advocate for At Work! helped write this bill and was on King 5 News talking about testifying for it.

YOU CAN SUPPORT THIS BILL BY GOING HERE AND CLICKING ON **COMMENT ON THIS BILL.**

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1541&Year=2023&Initiative=False>

HB 1109 - Providing funding for school districts for special education.

<https://apps.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/?BillNumber=1109> HYPERLINK

["https://apps.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/?BillNumber=1109&Year=2023&Initiative=false"](https://apps.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/?BillNumber=1109&Year=2023&Initiative=false) & HYPERLINK

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HB 1436 - Funding special education.

<https://apps.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/?BillNumber=1436> HYPERLINK

["https://apps.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/?BillNumber=1436&Year=2023&Initiative=false"](https://apps.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/?BillNumber=1436&Year=2023&Initiative=false) & HYPERLINK

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SHB 1694 - Addressing home care workforce shortages.

<https://apps.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1694> HYPERLINK

["https://apps.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1694&Initiative=false&Year=2023"](https://apps.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1694&Initiative=false&Year=2023) & HYPERLINK

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SHB 1305 - Improving access to and provision of a free appropriate public education for students with disabilities.

<https://apps.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1305> HYPERLINK

["https://apps.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1305&Initiative=false&Year=2023"](https://apps.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1305&Initiative=false&Year=2023) & HYPERLINK

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Monica Shuman recommends that you call the Legislative
Hotline

(1-800-562-6000)

about all of these bills.

Thank you! I enjoyed writing this information for you.
I hope you decide to advocate! If you want more information,
you can email me chrisb@atworkwa.org.

If you are interested in signing up for At Work! Action Alerts,
you can email johnl@atworkwa.org.

John is At work's Advocacy Manager
Ivanova Smith is our Activist Advocate

They can provide training on the legislative process
from their lived experience as
people with disabilities and working for At Work!
in leadership roles in public policy.