

FL SAND 2021 Legislative Priorities

Florida Self-Advocates Network'D (FL SAND)

FL SAND is a network of 19 grass-roots, self-advocacy groups that represents people with disabilities throughout the state of Florida. We advocate for disability rights and inclusion for all. Representing hundreds of self-advocates in Florida, FL SAND has adopted the following 2021 legislative priorities.



Preserve the iBudget

Floridians with intellectual and developmental disabilities have proven they live vital, productive lives that contribute to the greater community. They have a right to live, work, worship, volunteer in, and contribute to their communities. Despite their valuable contribution, this important group of voters lives with the threat of losing vital services due to lack of competitive wages for the essential direct service workers who provide their medically necessary care. These low wages and a growing waitlist threaten the momentum towards independence people with disabilities have gained over the years, and may force some into more costly institutional settings.

- ⇒ **Fund the Waiver**
- ⇒ **Anticipate Growth**
- ⇒ **Increase Provider Rates**
- ⇒ **Move People Off the Waitlist**

We support yearly increases for the iBudget Waiver that match the need for more services under this funding, including an increase in the rate of pay for direct service providers. The iBudget Waiver should be included in the social services estimating conference to secure a commitment to fund the essential services needed by the nearly 35,000 people currently funded on the waiver. Lastly, funds to move people off the waitlist onto the waiver should be increased.

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Supported Decision-Making



When people with disabilities need support with decisions like choosing where to live or deciding how to spend their money, there are limited options. This leads to overuse of guardianship and guardian advocacy —two laws that allow a person's rights to make decisions be taken away and given to someone else.

Supported Decision-Making (SDM) allows people with disabilities to keep their rights and make their own decisions *with the help* of people they trust.

FL SAND supports SDM4FL, a non-partisan coalition of disability rights and advocacy organizations, self-advocates, and parents, working together to pass a Supported Decision-Making Law in Florida. The group has secured sponsors for a bill that will make it easier for people with disabilities to use SDM. The proposed law will

include a sample agreement, explain the responsibilities of supporters, and require judges to consider SDM before they take away someone's rights. Information about SDM4FL and the proposed law can be found at www.idecideflorida.org.

FL SAND Supports the Passage of the Supported Decision- Making Bill: HB 681 & SB 1010



Michael Lincoln-McCreight, FL SAND member, SDM4FL co-chair, and the first person in Florida to terminate his guardianship using Supported Decision-Making.

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COVID-19 Related Action

People living with disabilities are proven to be among the most vulnerable populations when it comes to increased risk factors for complications and unique challenges associated with COVID 19. As such, FL SAND has made advocating for the solutions to these issues a priority.

FL SAND will work with legislators, officials, and other stakeholders at all levels to address the following COVID-19-related issues and safety measures in order to protect the disability population.

Increased Funding for and Streamlined Access to

- ♦ ***Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)***
- ♦ ***Mobile and/or in-home testing***
- ♦ ***Prioritized status in vaccine distribution for those who rely on multiple individuals to provide in-home care along with their caregivers***
- ♦ ***Durable medical equipment, by increasing funding and decreasing documentation requirements***

Efficient Transportation

Transportation challenges for people with disabilities have been further complicated by the pandemic, particularly as it relates to access to vaccination and testing sites. Transportation systems statewide need to be specifically funded and adequately accessible to all for this purpose; individuals with disabilities need to be notified of vaccination appointments with enough time to arrange transportation; and vaccination sites should have dedicated individuals ready to assist these individuals as they arrive.

No Immunity for Abuse & Neglect

FL SAND opposes Civil Immunity as it could potentially give facilities a blanket justification to avoid accountability for abuse and neglect. Our population needs to be protected at all costs. As such, we urge the legislature and all stakeholders to join us in opposition to SB 72 and HB 7.

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You can learn more about us at FLSAND.org,
or reach us at contactflsand@gmail.com

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