



One Voice Brevard

1 February 2026



Seeing Differently Thriving With Low Vision by Mandy Rankochak



Blindness is a spectrum of sight. It's not typically a state of total darkness, but rather a spectrum of visual impairment, where only 10-15% of legally blind individuals have no light perception. The spectrum ranges from low vision, to light perception and total blindness.

I was born with a genetic condition called Autosomal Recessive Ocular Albinism, a condition in the back of my retina that makes my eyes sensitive to light and contrast, which makes things harder to see. The best way I can explain my vision is that it's like using an old camera phone. Everything is foggy and low resolution; almost pixelated.

Although I might be on the higher end of the blindness spectrum, I still struggle with fine motor skills (like sewing or using tools), and my arch nemesis, driving. I'll never be able to drive, which affects my independence greatly, as I have to rely on others to get me around town. I pay a pretty hefty "disability tax" of sorts, as I have to rely on paratransit and Uber to get around town and delivery services for everything else. Paying a premium just to live and maintain stability and independence is hard work.

I also sometimes travel with a cane when going to crowded or unfamiliar areas as a way of support and a visual cue in case I need assistance. It took me years to be confident in using one because I felt like I didn't really need it, but using I has helped me navigate the world with greater ease.

Although I can see enough to use my phone or navigate smaller crowds and familiar places, that doesn't make the struggle any less real. I don't fake my disability for attention or financial gain. I am in the grey area of blindness, and that's (im)perfectly OK with me.

Mandy Rankochak lives in Orlando, and is a graduate of Partners in Policymaking as well as a member of FL SAND (Self-Advocate Network)

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Honoring Dr. King in Advocacy

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s leadership in the Civil Rights Movement inspired generations of advocates to organize peacefully and demand equal rights, helping shape landmark reforms like the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act that expanded access and opportunity for marginalized groups.

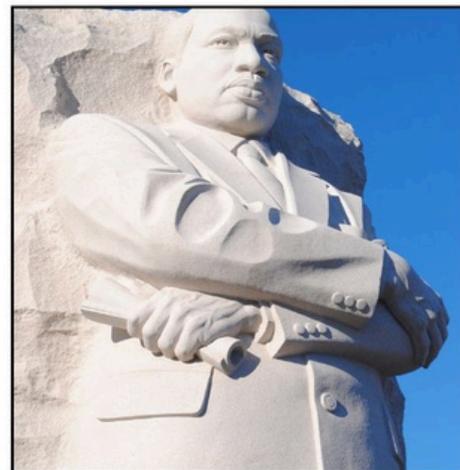
His vision of justice and equality reminds us that civil rights belong to everyone, including people with disabilities. The Disability Rights Movement was deeply influenced by the strategies and moral leadership of the Civil Rights Movement, affirming that discrimination—whether based on race, disability, or any other identity—denies individuals full participation in community life.

Building on this legacy, King's insistence that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere laid a moral foundation for later movements focused on inclusion and equity. These efforts aim to ensure that workplaces, schools, and communities are welcoming and accessible to all.

The 504 Sit-Ins of 1977 are a powerful example of this influence. Inspired by the Civil Rights Movement, more than 100 disability rights activists occupied a federal office in San Francisco for 25 days, one of the longest peaceful occupations of a federal building in U.S. history. Leaders such as Judy Heumann, Kitty Cone, and Brad Lomax—a Black Panther member who helped connect disability rights to racial justice—helped coordinate the protest. Their determination forced the government to enforce Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, leaving a lasting legacy that proved disability rights are civil rights and paved the way for the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Over the past year, hard-won civil rights and disability protections have faced growing challenges through policy changes, legal threats, and harmful rhetoric that risk weakening access, inclusion, and equal opportunity. These attacks remind us that progress is never guaranteed and must be actively defended. By coming together as a community—centering lived experience, standing in solidarity across movements, and speaking up for one another—we can ensure that these threats do not undo decades of advocacy or diminish the dignity and belonging of people with disabilities. In an election year, it is more vital than ever for everyone—including people with disabilities and their allies—to participate fully in our democracy, ensuring that policies and leaders reflect the rights and needs of all citizens. By staying engaged and raising our voices, we can protect hard-won gains and push for meaningful change that leaves no one behind.

Honoring Dr. King's legacy means recommitting to building inclusive systems that remove barriers, presume competence, and ensure people with disabilities are valued, heard, and able to thrive alongside their peers.





Flutie Foundation 5K Run for Autism

by Dr. Joseph A. Werner, Director, Brevard Autism Coalition



On February 21st, the Flutie Foundation and the Brevard Autism Coalition (BAC) will be holding its 16th Annual Run/Walk for Autism Awareness. Last year we had 650 runners and walkers register for this great annual event, and we are excited to carry the same energy forward to our 2026 event. 2025 also saw ex-NFL star quarterback Doug Flutie make an appearance driving his vintage Batmobile and taking pictures with his hockey team and bringing added excitement and fun.

The Run/Walk for Autism Awareness is more than just a run/walk, it's an opportunity for the entire Brevard County community to come together to raise awareness and support for families and people on the autism spectrum. This is a race/walk filled with smiles and family fun, and encourages everyone to get out and move, as movement is medicine.

The Brevard Autism Coalition is a non-profit group of medical professionals, educators, service providers and families dealing with autism, who have been coming together since 2010 to provide services, resources and information regarding autism to the Brevard County community. Funding from the BAC Autism 5k run/walk for Autism awareness goes to offset costs and provide scholarships for adolescents to attend a one-week Prevocational Adventure camp held every spring, and Camp-2-Can, a six-week summer camp for children and adolescents with autism.

In addition, The Brevard Autism Coalition runs a once-a-month gold event at US I golf in Rockledge, partners with the Cocoa Village Playhouse for two sensory sensitive plays (March 31st and June 6th 2026), and provides free seminars for families and individuals dealing with autism and other disabilities. It also provides connections with local politicians to advocate and advance state laws that support individuals with neurodiversity, and families and individuals with autism and other disabilities.

This year's run/walk will be held on February 21st, at the Schechter Community Center, 1089 S. Patrick Dr., Satellite Beach, Florida 32937. There will be refreshments, a great race shirt, age level awards, finishing medals, a DJ playing music, and a free children's race following the main event. The BAC 5k race/walk is also part of the 8th annual Run for the Kids Challenge (RFKC). The RFKC is a four-part 5K race series, by three well established,



Flutie Foundation 5K Run for Autism

(continued)

community driven non-profit organizations. These races include the Tooth Trot 5K on January 24th, the Flutie Foundation Brevard Autism 5K run/walk for Autism Awareness on February 21st, and the Brianna Marie Foundation 5K race to support research and prenatal surgeries on February 28th.

We are very excited to invite you to attend this event, so please come out and support a race that honors and supports the diversity of the lives of people in Brevard, and believes we are all stronger when we all feel included and equal. Registration for the Flutie Foundation Brevard Autism 5K race/walk can be done at the Running Zone or runsignup.com/Race/FL/Melbourne/RunfortheKidsSeriesRegistration.

Please feel free to contact Joseph Werner, director Brevard Autism Coalition, at 768-6800.





Support The “Right to Repair” Bill

by JJ Holmes, Self-Advocate

The Motorized Wheelchair Right to Repair bill (SB 586/HB 487) is exactly what it sounds like. It would require wheelchair manufacturers to make the parts, tools and repair information available so people like me, who rely on power chairs, can actually get them fixed without waiting months or being forced into a single, overpriced repair option.

Last year there were literal random electrical sparks coming from the wiring on my power chair which is a fun surprise when the device involved is basically my legs. As I told lawmakers, I’m one short circuit away from an execution. And the reason it gets this bad isn’t because the fix is complicated, it’s because red tape and supply delays turn a basic repair into a months long waiting game. So instead of a quick fix, my chair starts to look like a middle school science project where the kid absolutely waited until the night before to build it. This bill really matters because it treats mobility devices like what they are, essential equipment, not luxury gadgets you can afford to wait on while the parts sit in a warehouse somewhere.

And here’s the part that really breaks my brain. My dad can fix my wheelchair accessible van. He can open it up, replace parts, do real mechanical work, but he can’t fix my power chair. Only one of those things can fly down the highway at 70 miles an hour, and it is not my power chair. Meanwhile, when a power chair breaks, people don’t just get inconvenienced; they get stranded in the middle of the road and on sidewalks miles from home. Long repair wait times aren’t just annoying, they’re dangerous. This bill is about not leaving people stuck at home or risk them breaking down when they’re out. Letting people fix the equipment they rely on to exist in the world shouldn’t be controversial. It should be obvious.

Please support Senate Bill 586 and House Bill 487.



Epilepsy: Advocating for Awareness

By: Nicole Grabner

February's International Epilepsy Awareness Day reminds us that epilepsy is one of the most common neurological conditions affecting children—impacting about 1 in 26 people over their lifetime—yet it is still widely misunderstood. For many families, epilepsy is not defined only by seizures, but by the daily need for safety planning, timely medical care, and understanding from schools and community spaces. Greater awareness helps reduce stigma, improves emergency response, and ensures that children with epilepsy are supported—not excluded—from learning, recreation, and everyday activities.

Epilepsy occurs at significantly higher rates among children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, making awareness and coordinated care especially important. Research shows that 20 to 30 percent of children with autism also have epilepsy, and many children experience complex seizure patterns, communication barriers, or overlapping support needs. These realities highlight the importance of individualized planning across both healthcare and educational settings so that children remain safe, included, and able to fully participate.

This year, the Florida Legislature is considering Senate Bill 186, titled “Student Health and Safety,” which aims to strengthen how schools support students with epilepsy and seizure disorders. The bill would expand requirements for individualized seizure action plans, increase training for school staff on recognizing and responding to seizures, and require schools to share seizure first-aid information. Importantly, the training would remain valid for five years and be based on guidance from national epilepsy organizations—helping schools better prepare to support all students, including those with co-occurring intellectual or developmental disabilities who may face higher seizure risks. Epilepsy Awareness Day reminds us that understanding, preparation, and compassion can make a life-changing difference for children and families. By increasing education, supporting thoughtful policies like SB 186, and recognizing the unique needs of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, we move closer to school environments where safety and inclusion are not optional—but expected. Together, we can help ensure every child is seen, supported, and given the opportunity to thrive.

Join Efforts to Define Autism Responsibly

BY: NICOLE GRABNER



This legislative session, advocates, families, and professionals across Florida have come together around a shared goal: getting the definition of autism right in state law. **House Bill 411** and its companion, **Senate Bill 1652**, are the result of careful, collaborative work to modernize Florida’s statutory definition of autism so it aligns with the diagnosis doctors use today.

At first glance, updating a definition may seem minor—but definitions matter. They shape who qualifies for services, how agencies interpret eligibility, and whether families can access the supports their children and loved ones need. Outdated language can unintentionally exclude people, create confusion across systems, and leave families fighting unnecessary battles. By aligning Florida law with current diagnostic standards, HB 411 and SB 1652 help promote clarity and fairness across disability services.

This effort is rooted in real-world experience. When my family first entered this system three years ago, we struggled to navigate multiple agencies that each relied on different definitions and required separate proof of the same medical diagnosis. Already processing a life-changing diagnosis, the added burden of inconsistent standards felt especially overwhelming—and unnecessary—for families in crisis. That experience helped spark the call to fix a statutory definition that has remained unchanged for more than thirty years.

Importantly, while this bill modernizes outdated statutory language, access to services will continue to be guided by existing agency administrative rules and eligibility processes, preserving current program structures and funding frameworks.

We encourage families, advocates, and allies to stay engaged and reach out to their legislators in support of HB 411 and SB 1652. Getting the definition right is a critical step toward getting support right—for autistic Floridians today and in the future.

SB 1652(Senator Burgess)/HB 411(Rep Maggard)
Updating the legal definition of “Autism.”

The last time the legal definition of “autism” was updated in 363.063 (Agency for Persons with Disabilities) was **before 2000**.

This bill seeks to update the definition to match the current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM).

Autism is...

Why this matters?
Families have to navigate multiple systems after diagnosis to find resources, and that endeavor is not aided by the fact that each agency has a **DIFFERENT** definition.

Like other states, Florida should match the current definition that is used by a doctor from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM).

How can you help?

- Vote in support.
- Request that committee leadership have a hearing.
- Share the bill with your constituents!

Baker Act
*\$16,000/incident

Home Health Aide
*\$3,200/mo

*Numbers are best estimates.

Info@onevoicebrevard.com
www.onevoicecoalitionflorida.org

I-Budget Waiver Forums

by Nicole Grabner

APD Florida (Agency for Persons With Disabilities) is hosting additional forums in February and March for individuals and families who have received waiver enrollment Offers for the iBudget Florida Waiver.

These “drop in” events are designed to give individuals and families who recently received waiver enrollment offers the opportunity to meet with the Agency and the Department of Children and Families.

Taken advantage of the opportunity to meet with APD and DCF to get your questions answered!

iBudget Florida Waiver Enrollment Forums

FEBRUARY			
Region	Date	Time	Location
CENTRAL	Monday, February 16, 2026	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	APD Orlando Office 400 W Robinson St., South Tower, Ste 430 Orlando, FL 32801
CENTRAL	Tuesday, February 17, 2026	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	APD Wildwood Office 901 Industrial Drive, Suite 100 Wildwood, FL 34785
CENTRAL	Thursday, February 19, 2026	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	APD Lakeland Office 200 N. Kentucky Ave., Suite 432 Lakeland, FL 33801
NORTHEAST	Thursday, February 12, 2026	10:00 am - 12:00 pm	APD Jacksonville Office 3631 Hodges Blvd. Jacksonville, FL 32224
NORTHWEST	Thursday, February 5, 2026	10:00 am - 12:00 pm CST	APD Pensacola Office 160 West Government St., Ste 412 Pensacola, FL 32502
NORTHWEST	Friday, February 13, 2026	10:00 am - 12:00 pm CST	APD Panama City Office 3309 Frankford Ave, Suite C Panama City, FL 32405
NORTHWEST	Thursday, February 19, 2026	10:00 am - 12:00 pm EST	APD Tallahassee Office 3800 Esplanade Way, Suite 220 Tallahassee, FL 32399
SOUTHEAST	Thursday, February 5, 2026	10:00 am - 2:00 pm	APD West Palm Beach Office 111 South Sapodilla Ave. First Floor Conference Room West Palm Beach, FL 33401
SOUTHERN	Wednesday, February 11, 2026	10:00 am - 12:00 pm	DCF Visionary Room - Rohde Building - 401 NW 2nd Ave., North Tower 1011 Miami, FL 33128
SUNCOAST	Thursday, February 19, 2026	10:00 am - 12:00 pm	APD Ft. Myers Office 2295 Victoria Ave., Room 140 Fort Myers, FL 33901
SUNCOAST	Friday, February 20, 2026	10:00 am - 12:00 pm	APD Tampa Office 1313 N. Tampa Street, Room 516 Tampa, FL 33602

I-Budget Waiver Forums

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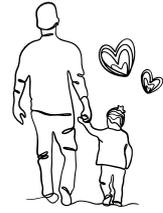
MARCH			
Region	Date	Time	Location
CENTRAL	Monday, March 9, 2026	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	APD Orlando Office 400 W Robinson St., South Tower, Ste 430, Orlando, FL 32801
CENTRAL	Tuesday, March 10, 2026	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	APD Wildwood Office 901 Industrial Drive, Suite 100 Wildwood, FL 34785
CENTRAL	Wednesday, March 18, 2026	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	APD Lakeland Office 200 N. Kentucky Ave., Suite 432 Lakeland, FL 33801
NORTHEAST	Thursday, March 12, 2026	10:00 am - 12:00 pm	APD Jacksonville Office 3631 Hodges Blvd. Jacksonville, FL 32224
NORTHWEST	Thursday, March 5, 2026	10:00 am - 12:00 pm CST	APD Pensacola Office 160 West Government Street Ste 412 Pensacola, FL 32502
NORTHWEST	Friday, March 13, 2026	10:00 am - 12:00 pm CST	APD Panama City Office 3309 Frankford Ave, Suite C Panama City, FL 32405
NORTHWEST	Thursday, March 19, 2026	10:00 am - 12:00 pm EST	APD Tallahassee Office 3800 Esplanade Way, Suite 220 Tallahassee, FL 32399
SOUTHEAST	Wednesday, March 4, 2026	10:00 am - 2:00 pm	APD West Palm Beach Office 111 South Sapodilla Ave. First Floor Conference Room, West Palm Beach, FL 33401
SOUTHERN	Wednesday, March 25, 2026	10:00 am - 12:00 pm	DCF Visionary Room - Rohde Building - 401 NW 2nd Ave, North Tower 1011 Miami, FL 33128
SUNCOAST	Friday, March 20, 2026	10:00 am - 12:00 pm	APD Tampa Office 1313 N. Tampa Street, Room 516 Tampa, FL 33602
SUNCOAST	Thursday, March 26, 2026	10:00 am - 12:00 pm	APD Ft. Myers Office 2295 Victoria Ave., Room 140 Fort Myers, FL 33901

Advocacy

P	Z	Q	V	M	B	I	P	O	L	A	R	S	L	CEREBRALPALSY
D	C	R	D	Y	S	L	E	X	I	A	L	U	L	AUTISM
O	W	E	B	Q	Q	J	I	Y	F	W	M	N	S	DOWNSYNDROME
W	H	K	R	D	T	G	Q	Y	Q	A	E	F	P	MENTALHEALTH
N	E	S	A	E	X	D	A	X	U	R	N	L	I	SPINABIFIDA
S	E	A	D	C	B	I	J	T	C	E	T	O	N	IDD
Y	L	T	H	I	Q	R	U	R	Z	N	A	W	A	AWARENESS
N	C	A	D	V	O	C	A	C	Y	E	L	E	B	ADVOCACY
D	H	Q	G	K	O	H	R	L	L	S	H	R	I	WHEELCHAIR
R	A	A	U	T	I	S	M	U	P	S	E	L	F	SUNFLOWER
O	I	E	I	J	K	K	X	Z	A	A	A	T	I	ADHD
M	R	K	A	I	C	K	I	X	Q	H	L	G	D	BIPOLAR
E	K	M	F	D	S	U	P	P	O	R	T	S	A	DYSLEXIA
P	Z	J	I	D	C	Y	V	O	E	Q	H	D	Y	SUPPORT

Dad's Corner

by Guest Author Christopher Grabner



“Nobody makes a greater mistake than he who does nothing because he could do only a little.” - Edmund Burke

“It’s worth remembering that it is often the small steps, not giant leaps, that bring about the most lasting change.” - Queen Elizabeth II

2025 was a crazy year for America, and 2026 is looking even more tumultuous with civil unrest steadily rising. From a geopolitical perspective, things look to be shifting and upheaving decades old alliances. I don’t know about you, but besides feeling overwhelmed, I feel a call to action, but I also feel like my voice will have little to no impact, so I feel internal struggle to do something, but I don’t know what! That is, until I look at my wife charging forward with her Autism bill by continually and tirelessly communicating with our state and local legislators and making tremendous strides for our families; she truly is a powerhouse, and I am in awe of her tenacity and professionalism.

“The future of this republic is in the hands of the American voter.” – Dwight D. Eisenhower

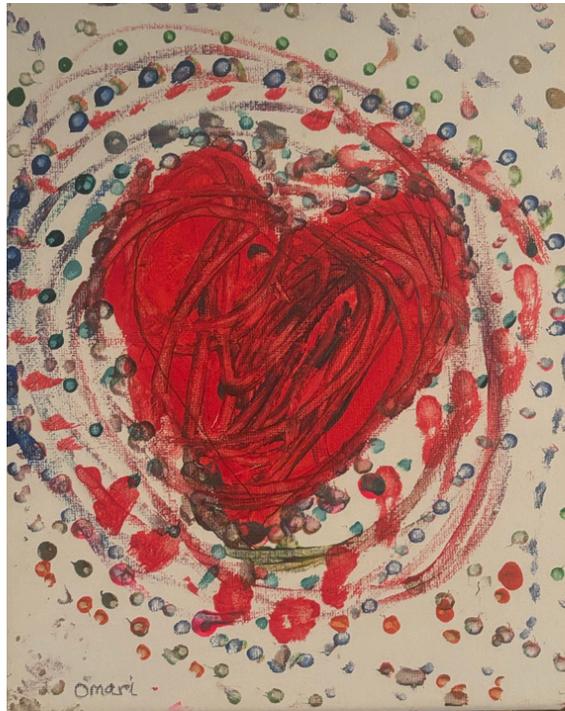
In this context, her actions remind me that the most effective way to drive change in our country is to let your local, state, and federal representatives know where you stand. This and casting your vote at the upcoming midterms are the most powerful tools we as citizens have in this great democratic republic.

“I became convinced that noncooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good.” Dr. Martin Luther King Jr

As 2025 ended and 2026 began, we have seen a larger portion of our citizens rise up in protest or that their only course is civil disobedience, which is every American’s right but I urge you to speak to your legislators and ultimately use your ballot! That said, my opinion and \$1.50 will get you a cup of coffee so if you feel the need to get out there and protest, please be careful, and take care of one another. In my opinion, civil discourse is far more effective, but sadly, the art of effective communication seems to be dying. Perhaps take some time with a friend who has differing views from you and have an open dialogue with them. Stay safe out there!



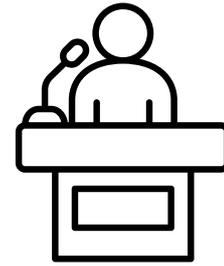
Monthly Art Submission



This Month's Artwork has been submitted by
Omari Yearby, one of the Angels Bridging Gaps
members.

Bill Buzz

By: Nicole Grabner, Director, One Voice
Brevard



Three weeks of the 2026 Legislative Session down and just a few more to go! Next week we expect the budgets for agencies like AHCA and APD to be announced; and will be sure to share any new updates there as soon as possible.

You can also check back on our website, <https://onevoicecoalitionflorida.org/advocacy>, for updated information.

We will be briefing these slides, weekly, on our partner's Friday Zoom call, We The People, and we will also be posting updated tracking on our Facebook page. (Link to sign up for the Zoom meetings, which will begin on 9 January, see the following: <https://www.flddadvocacy.org/join-the-movement>)

2026 DISABILITY BILL TRACKER



BILL NUMBER	SPONSOR	1ST COM	2ND COM	3RD COM	4TH COM	NOTES
(S) SB 72 - IEPs (H) HB 615	Senator Harrell Representative Tendrich	AW FV	AW		N/A N/A	Bill Introduced Bill awaiting second committee.
(S) SB 1652 - Autism Definition (H) HB 411	Senator Burgess Representative Maggard	AW AW			N/A N/A	Bill Referred Bill Read for the First Time
(S) SB 418 - Law Enf w/Autism (H) HB 365	Senator Jones Representative Valdez	FV AW	AW		N/A	Bill awaiting second committee. Bill Read for the First Time
(S) SB 478 - Music Therapy (H) HB 829	Senator Smith Representative Eskamani	AW AW			N/A N/A	Bill Read for the First Time Bill Read for the First Time
(S) SB 494 - Student Elopement (H) HB 423	Senator Arrington Representative Eskamani	AW AW		N/A	N/A N/A	Bill Read for the First Time Bill Read for the First Time
(S) SB 1560 - High Acuity Kids (H) HB 475	Senator Simon Representative Salzman	AW AW			N/A	Bill Introduced Bill Read for the First Time
(S) CS/SB 556 - HS Diploma (H) CS/HB 453	Senator Berman Representative Gossett-Seidman	FV FV	AW FV	N/A	N/A N/A	Bill awaiting second committee Bill added to Second Reading Calendar
(S) SB 586 - Repair Mobility Dev (H) HB 487	Senator Smith Representative Eskamani	AW FV	FV	N/A	N/A N/A	Bill Introduced Bill added to Second Reading Calendar.
(S) SB 794 - APD (H) HB 565	Senator Jones Representative Tant	AW AW		N/A	N/A N/A	Bill Introduced Bill Read for the First Time
(S) SB 1016 - Medicaid Working (H) HB 915	Senator Bradley Representative Tant	FV FV	AW FV	AW	N/A N/A	Bill awaiting second committee. Bill awaiting third committee

*To find who your State Legislators are, please see the Florida House and Florida Senate websites.

Bill Buzz, Part 2

By: Nicole Grabner, Director, One Voice
Brevard

2026 DISABILITY BILL TRACKER



BILL NUMBER	SPONSOR	1ST COM	2ND COM	3RD COM	4TH COM	NOTES
(S) SB 574 - SLPs (H) HB 471	Senator Jones Representative Chambliss	AW AW			N/A N/A	Bill Introduced Bill Read for the First Time
(S) SB 186 - Student Health Epilepsy (H) HB 1201	Senator Garcia Representative Mooney	AW FV	AW		N/A N/A	Bill Referred Bill awaiting second committee.
(S) SB 562 - Communication (H) HB 533	Senator Garcia Representative Woodson	AW AW			N/A	Bill Introduced Bill Read for the First Time
(S) SB 568 - Managed Care (H) HB 531	Senator Harrell Representative Barnaby	AW AW		N/A	N/A N/A	Bill Read for the First Time Bill Read for the First Time
(S) SB 1008 - Support K-12 (H) HB 857	Senator Truenow Representative Lopez	AW AW			N/A N/A	Bill Introduced Bill Read for the First Time
(S) SB 1046 - Detect DD & ASD (H) HB 969	Senator Calatayud Representative Tant	AW AW			N/A N/A	Bill Introduced Bill Read for the First Time
(S) SB 1170 - Cameras in Class (H) HB 859	Senator Calatayud Representative Chambliss	AW FV	AW		N/A N/A	On agenda, 3 February at 3:30 PM. Bill awaiting second committee.
(S) SB 1302 - Ped Mental Health (H) HB 1133	Senator Rouson Representative Tendrich	AW AW			N/A N/A	Bill Introduced Bill Read for the First Time
(S) SB 1640 - Pilot Dental Med (H) HB 1507	Senator Smith Representative Harris	AW AW			N/A N/A	Bill Introduced Bill Read for the First Time
(S) SB 1570 - Missing Persons (H) HB 1405	Senator Gaetz Representative Duggan	FV AW	AW		N/A N/A	Bill awaiting second committee. Bill Read for the First Time

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*As of 30 January. Please check Senate and House website for current information.

*To find who your State Legislators are, please see the Florida House and Florida Senate websites.

A few bills could use your support to help move forward. A quick phone call or email will be very helpful in letting legislators know that you support these efforts! The list below will have suggested names to call, but don't forget to contact your own legislators to let them know you support the bill!

HB 411/SB 1652 (Terminology Associated with Autism)

Contact: Representative Melo Email: lauren.melo@flhouse.gov Phone: (850) 717-5082

Contact: Senator Grall Email: Grall.Erin.web@flsenate.gov Phone: (850) 487-5029

HB 423/SB 494 (Student Elopement)

Contact: Representative Rizo Email: alex.rizo@flhouse.gov Phone: (850) 717-5112

Contact: Senator Simon Email: simon.corey.web@flsenate.gov Phone: (850) 487-5003

SB 586 (Repair of Mobility Devices) *The House companion bill, HB 487, has already finished.

Contact: Senator Leek Email: leek.tom.web@flsenate.gov Phone: (850) 487-5007

HB 1507/SB 1640 (Medicaid Dental Pilot Program for Persons with Disabilities)

Contact: Representative Anderson Email: Adam.Anderson@flhouse.gov Phone: (850) 717-5057

Contact: Senator Burton Email: Burton.Colleen.web@flsenate.gov Phone: (850) 487-5012

HB 565/SB 794 (Agency for Persons with Disabilities)

Contact: Representative Melo Email: lauren.melo@flhouse.gov Phone: (850) 717-5082

Contact: Senator Grall Email: Grall.Erin.web@flsenate.gov Phone: (850) 487-5029

OVCFL 2026 Legislative Platform



ONE VOICE COALITION 2026 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM



Health Care

- Protecting and Expanding Medicaid - Ensuring Floridians have access to quality, affordable health care.
- Standardize and update the legal definition of autism in the Florida Statutes.
- KidCare Rollout - ensure effective implementation of this benefit

Protect children with disabilities by ensuring the protection of OSEP (Office of Special Education Programs), OCR (Office of Civil Rights), and protecting IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.



Education



Collaboration

Bring collaboration and transparency to every aspect of policy affecting those with disabilities. It is imperative to ensure that our voices are heard when decisions are being made - Nothing about us without us!



info@onevoicebrevard.com



www.onevoicecoalitionflorida.org

Resources and Contact Information

- Brevard Autism Coalition; <https://brevardautismcoalition.com/>
- Angels Bridging Gaps; <https://angelsbridginggaps.org/>
- The Parker Foundation; <https://www.theparkerfoundation.com/>
- S.O.A.K.; <https://www.soakautism.com/>
- Down Syndrome Association of Brevard; <https://www.dsabrevard.org/>
- UCF CARD; <https://ucf-card.org/>
- Florida Developmental Disabilities Council; <https://www.fddc.org/>
- Project 10; <https://project10.info/>
- Vocational Rehabilitation; <https://www.rehabworks.org/contact/area3.html>
- FLAPSE; <https://apse.org/chapter/florida/>
- The Arc of Space Coast; <https://www.arcofsc.org/>
- Promise in Brevard; <https://promiseinbrevard.com/>
- Brevard Resource Center for Disability Solutions; <https://rcdsfl.org/>
- The Family Cafe; <https://familycafe.net>
- Family Liason Project; <https://familyliasonproject.com>
- Early Steps Space Coast; <https://spacecoastes.org>
- Family Care Council Area 7; <https://fccflorida.org/area-7-fcc.html>
- Bright Feats magazine
- Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Mobil Response Team 24/hour line (321) 213-0315
- Feeding Florida (food bank information) <https://www.feedingflorida.org/>
- Everything Brevard (resource website)
<https://www.everythingbrevard.com/blog/guide-space-coast-food-pantries>



For more information or questions, please see our Facebook page.

Brevard County Delegation

CONTACT US

Brevard County Delegation



Senator Debbie Mayfield
District 19

📞 District Office (321) 409 - 2025
Capital Office (850) 487 - 5019

✉️ debbie.mayfield@flsenate.gov

🌐 <https://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/S19>

📍 900 East Strawbridge Avenue
Room 408
Melbourne, FL 32901



Senator Tom Wright
District 8

📞 District Office (386) 304 - 7630
Capital Office (850) 487 - 5008

✉️ tom.wright@flsenate.gov

🌐 <https://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/S8>

📍 4606 South Clyde Morris Boulevard
Suite 2-J
Port Orange, FL 32129



CONTACT US

Brevard County Delegation



Rep. Chase Tramont
District 30

📞 District Office (386) 278 - 1640
Capital Office (850) 717 - 5030

✉️ chase.tramont@flhouse.gov

🌐 <https://www.flhouse.gov/Sections/Representatives/detail.s.aspx?MemberId=4867&LegislativeTermId=91>

📍 Suite 201D
5889 South Williamson Boulevard
Port Orange, FL 32128-6110



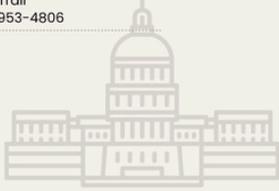
Rep. Tyler Sirois
District 31

📞 District Office (386) 304 - 7630
Capital Office (850) 487 - 5008

✉️ tyler.sirois@flhouse.gov

🌐 <https://www.flhouse.gov/Sections/Representatives/detail.s.aspx?MemberId=4748&LegislativeTermId=91>

📍 Suite 206
260 North Tropical Trail
Merritt Island, FL 32953-4806



CONTACT US

Brevard County Delegation



Rep. Brian Hodggers
District 32

📞 District Office (321) 497 - 8200
Capital Office (850) 717 - 5032

✉️ brian.hodggers@flhouse.gov

🌐 <https://www.flhouse.gov/Sections/Representatives/detail.s.aspx?MemberId=5064&LegislativeTermId=91>

📍 Building B #202
2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way
Viera, FL 32940-6605



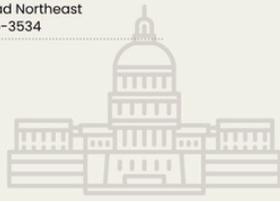
Rep. Monique Miller
District 33

📞 District Office (321) 497 - 8170
Capital Office (850) 717 - 5033

✉️ monique.miller@flhouse.gov

🌐 <https://www.flhouse.gov/Sections/Representatives/custom/details.aspx?MemberId=4913&LegislativeTermId=91>

📍 Suite 5
2539 Palm Bay Road Northeast
Palm Bay, FL 32905-3534



CONTACT US

Brevard County Delegation



Rep. Robert Brackett
District 34

📞 District Office (772) 365 - 9230
Capital Office (850) 717 - 5034

✉️ robert.brackett@flhouse.gov

🌐 <https://www.flhouse.gov/Sections/Representatives/detail.s.aspx?MemberId=4870&LegislativeTermId=91>

📍 Suite B2-203
1800 27th Street
Vero Beach, FL 32960-0310



Sign up for my E-Newsletter!



@RepHaridopolos



NEED HELP WITH A FEDERAL AGENCY?

For assistance with:

- Social Security
- The IRS
- Veterans Affairs
- Medicare
- Immigration/Passports

Call (321)-632-1776 or scan the QR code



MIKE HARIDOPOLOS
PROTECT. INSURE. FUTURE.
PROFESSIONAL DISTRICT





February Events

Low Vision Awareness Month

2026							FEBRUARY						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
8	9	10	11	12	13	14							
15	16	17	18	19	20	21							
22	23	24	25	26	27	28							

- Rise and Reign, Young Ladies Empowerment Retreat sponsored by The Parker Foundation, **Saturday, 7 February**, from 12:30 - 2:30, Kiwi Racquet and Fitness Club, 30 Tradewinds Dr, Indian Harbor Beach. Free registration via Eventbrite. See flyer.
- UCF CARD presents "Caregivers of Adults and Soon-to-Be Adults with ASD", a resource and discussion group, on **Wednesdays** via Zoom from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Registration required. See flyer for additional details.
- Brevard Autism Coalition presents the Flutie 5K Run/Walk for Autism Awareness on **Saturday, 21 February** at 8:00 a.m. at the David R. Schechter Community Center in Satellite Beach. See flyer for registration information. Volunteers needed!!
- Community Playdate for Under 5, **Wednesday, 25 February**, from 9-10:30 at the Children's Center Titusville. This play date is held every fourth Wednesday of the month. Check the flyer for additional information.
- UCF CARD presents "Parent Mindfulness Matters", an 8-week course designed for caregivers and their children (ages 5-8). Overview **Tuesday, January 6th**, from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. Starts every **Tuesday, January 20th - March 10th**. See flyer to register.
- Hey Mama! Mom's Retreat sponsored by The Parker Foundation, **Saturday, 7 February**, from 9 - 11, Kiwi Racquet and Fitness Club, 30 Tradewinds Dr, Indian Harbor Beach. Free registration via Eventbrite.
- Angels Bridging Gaps, Adult group, beginning **6 January**. Events are scheduled from 11:00 am to 2 pm, Tuesday through Thursday. For more information, contact Angels Bridging Gaps at: <https://angelsbridginggaps.org/abgworks-program-calendar>
- Pop Up Market, **Saturday, 7 February** from 10-2, 4880 Stack Blvd, Suite E6, Melbourne. Sponsored by ABG Works, Inc. See Flyer for additional details.
- Overview of Disability Right Florida, Zoom hosted by Florida Atlantic Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, **Wednesday, 25 February**, from 12-1:30. Registration by Eventbrite. See flyer for additional information.
- FLAPSE Collaboration Summit 2026, **25-26 February**, Hyatt Place, St Augustine, Vilano Beach, FL. On line registration required. Contact Kerri Morse at kerrimorseconsultinggroup.com. See attached flyer.
- Glow Party, presented by At His Table Special Needs Ministry, **Sunday, 22 February** from 2 - 5 p.m., MICS Gym, 135 Magnolia Ave, Merritt Island. Registration required. See flyer.
- Save the Date! Brevard Autism Coalition presents Camp 2 Can 2026. Registration opens on **January 17th**. Camp dates are **June 8-12, June 15-19, June 22-26, July 6-10, July 13-17, and July 20-24**. See flyer for registration information.
- Save the Date: Waves of Acceptance, **Saturday, 25 April**, 10 - 4, Space Coast Field of Dreams, 3053 Fell Rd, West Melbourne. See flyer for more information.
- Save the Date! Brevard Autism Coalition Presents the 7th Annual 2026 Spring Break Prevoctional Adventure Camp. Registration opens **January 17th**. Camp dates are **March 23th to 27th**. See flyer for additional information
- Save the Date: Neurodivergent Committee Multi-State Meeting, hosted by NAMI EC, **Wednesday, 25 March**, from 6-7 pm via Zoom. RSVP required. See flyer for details



Event Flyers

COMMUNITY PLAY DATE
Under 5's

EVERY 4TH WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH
From 9:00am - 10:30am
The Children's Center
5650 S. Washington Ave.,
Titusville 32780
RSVP to Mary: 321-292-1370
SPACES ARE LIMITED!

THE CHILDREN'S CENTER
early steps



Young Ladies Empowerment Retreat
12:30pm to 2:30pm
February 7th, 2026
Location: Kiwi Racquet and Fitness Club
Banquet Room - 2nd Floor
30 Tradewinds Drive - Indian Harbor Beach, FL 32937

Join Melissa Parker, RN, CPC, Co-Founder of The Parker Foundation and friends for a special afternoon of sisterhood, service and self-development. This free retreat is open to preteen (10-12) and teenage (13-18) girls of all abilities. Light refreshments will be served. Fun activities, uplifting speakers, socializing, self-care and more!
Featured Speaker: Dyani Peterson of Dyani Speaks

FREE REGISTRATION VIA EVENTBRITE
PLEASE CANCEL YOUR REGISTRATION IF UNABLE TO ATTEND
AS SPOTS ARE LIMITED:

<https://riseandreignteen2026.eventbrite.com>

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS
EMAIL [INFO@THEPARKERFOUNDATION.COM](mailto:info@theparkerfoundation.com)



Center for Autism and Related Disabilities

Parent Child Mindfulness Matters

This 8-week course is designed for caregivers and their children (ages 5-8) to learn simple, mindful techniques that support emotional regulation.

Time: 5:30 - 7:00PM
Overview: Tuesday, January 6th, 5:30-6:30PM
Starts: EVERY TUESDAY January 20th - March 10th

To register, scan the QR code or use this link:
<https://pcmm2026.eventbrite.com>

Brevard Autism Coalition Presents: 7th Annual 2026 Spring Break Prevocational Adventure Camp



Camp Highlights:

- Running every aspect of a simulated coffee shop titled "Adventure Coffee"
- Filling out time sheets.
- Following a break schedule.
- Completing applications and job interviews daily.
- Job related training with implementing the skills learned.
- A variety of 5 job roles throughout the week (one each day).
- Additional opportunities to learn about basic work-readiness skills.
- Coaching to create a skills resume custom to each individual's strengths.



SAVE THE DATE!

REGISTRATION OPENS JANUARY 17, 2026!

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK
FOR MORE INFO AND UPDATES!



March 23-27th, 2026
8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
\$200 for the week

FEB 25
12-1:30 p.m.

<https://Disabilityrights.eventbrite.com>

Overview of Disability Rights Florida

Disability Rights Florida is a nonprofit organization that provides legal advocacy and rights protection for adults and children with a wide range of disabilities. Staff attorneys, advocates and investigators address civil rights violations, abuse and neglect, and discrimination...free and confidential specifically in these areas:

Disputes involving Medicaid eligibility including Protected Medicaid, Home & Community Based Services Waivers, Discrimination in housing, architectural barriers, service animals, transportation, employment, vocational rehabilitation (accessing, maintaining or regaining employment), and access to public and private programs and services—including veterans with service-related disabilities. Rights to a least restrictive environment, privacy, choice, dignity, and other basic human and civil rights. Barriers to a free and appropriate education, K-12 special education, transition services, and post-secondary education. Voting registration, vote casting, and accessible polling places. Supported Decision-Making as an alternative to guardianship.

Contact Lauren Veit at lveit@fau.edu or 561-617-3365 if you need assistance.
Advanced registration for this event is required. Please note, trainings may be rescheduled due to low registration.

Hosted by Florida Atlantic Center for Autism and Related Disabilities

Event Flyers

CAREGIVERS OF ADULTS AND SOON-TO-BE ADULTS WITH ASD

Resource and discussion group via Zoom
6:30PM-8:00PM

Free monthly resource and discussion group for parents of adults and late teens (16+) on the autism spectrum. Open forum for parents to discuss concerns, seek resources, and gain support in assisting their adult children.
NOW ON WEDNESDAYS!

TO REGISTER: scan the QR code or copy the link below:
<https://coa4634.eventbrite.com>





Center for Autism and Related Disabilities
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

AT HIS TABLE SPECIAL NEEDS MINISTRY PRESENTS

GLOW PARTY

FOR AGES 16 & UP

FEBRUARY 22
2:00 - 5:00 PM

MICS GYM - 135 MAGNOLIA AVE
MERRITT ISLAND, FL 32952

- Limited to the first 50 registrants
- Buddies are available upon request as you register
- Parent/Caregiver viewing will be available for the night



Scan the QR or Register @ <https://tinyurl.com/AHTGlowParty>

Hey Mama!

Mom's Retreat for those raising children with autism and special needs. Valentines Edition!

9:00am-11:30am
February 7th, 2026

Location: Kivi Racquet and Fitness Club
Banquet Room - 2nd Floor
30 Tradewinds Drive - Indian Harbor Beach, FL 32937

Coffee, light refreshments, self-care tips and takeaways, speakers, and connection with likeminded moms for sharing resources and experience.
*Childcare not provided

FREE REGISTRATION VIA EVENTBRITE
PLEASE CANCEL YOUR REGISTRATION IF UNABLE TO ATTEND AS SPOTS ARE LIMITED:

<https://heymamafeb2026.eventbrite.com>

FEBRUARY DEEP DIVE TOPIC AND SPEAKER TBA

FOR INFORMATION EMAIL
INFO@THEPARKERFOUNDATION.COM



Autism Coalition of Brevard

CAMP 2 CAN

2026

SAVE THE DATE!
Registration opens on January 17, 2026

Summer day camp for individuals with Autism and related conditions

Register for one or more weeks. \$285 per week

ACTIVITIES	EVENT DATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building friendships Learning and using social skills Exploring nature Sports and games Learning various functional skills Fieldtrips Leisure activities Arts and crafts 	June 8 - 12, 2026 June 15 - 19, 2026 June 22 - 26, 2026 July 6 - 10, 2026 July 13 - 17, 2026 July 20 - 24, 2026 *No camp during the week of June 29 - July 3

FOR MORE INFORMATION

BrevardAutismCoalition@gmail.com
www.brevardautismcoalition.com
facebook.com/BrevardAutismCoalition

Event Flyers

RUN, WALK OR ROLL FOR AUTISM

FLUTIE 5K
FOR AUTISM
BENEFITING
Autism Coalition
of Brevard

Sat, Feb 21st, 2026
8:00 AM
Satellite Beach, FL

Join us for a fun and inclusive
run, walk, or roll at
David R. Schechter Community Center

REGISTER NOW!








BRIGHT PATH EDUCATION
IS NOW OFFERING:
A HOME EDUCATION CO-OP

A small group environment for
students with disabilities &
learning differences

DETAILS:

- Academic & Social supports
- Monday- Thursday 8:00-2:00pm
- Fun Friday option available for those interested
- Accepting Scholarships & Private pay options
- 6:1 ratio
- Led by certified teachers & behavior technicians
- OT & Speech Language services can be contracted through local collaborative agencies

OPENING IN JANUARY

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
(321) 307-8240
1240 Rockledge Blvd, Suite 6
Rockledge, FL
BrightPathEducation2025@gmail.com

AGES 5-12




SHIP & SHOP

Come join us for a variety of unique local products!
All are welcome!

POP UP MARKET

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 7
10AM - 2PM

With the support of our new partnership with **SHIP & SHOP**, **Angels Bridging Gaps/ABGworks** will also be hosting our "Let Us Shine You Up PopUp Boutique" to help provide items to the **Very Special Guest** attending **Night to Shine** *(Dressy Clothing Donations Welcomed - Dropoff Site)

**4880 Stack Blvd Suite E6
Melbourne, FL 32901
info@shipandshopfl.com**




Arts for All STUDIO
ART CLASSES & WORKSHOPS AT THE STUDIO
STARTING in JANUARY

Mondays
Afterschool Art 4:00-4:45pm
Mixed Media Art Class for Kids ages 5 and Up
Advanced After School Art 5:00-6:00pm
Mixed Media Art Class for Kids ages 11 and Up

Tuesdays
Meet the Masters 12:30-1:30pm
Mixed Media Art Class with projects inspired by the masters and contemporary artists.

Mixed Media Arts 1:30-2:30pm
Explore Different Mediums and increase skills to use them as an artist

Wednesdays
Express Yourself (Teen Art Class) 7:00-8:30pm
Teen art class for students to explore and improve art skills in various mediums

Fridays
Able Artists Kids 9:30-10:15
Multimedia exploratory art class for neurodivergent kids
Able Artists Teens 10:15-11:00am
Multimedia exploratory art class for neurodivergent Teens
Graphic Design 11:30am-12noon
Intro to Graphic Design taught by EFSC Professor in the Advanced Technologies Department
Intro To Adobe for Design 12:30-2pm
Software subscription required. Bring your own computer and learn intro level skills for Adobe Photoshop, Indesign and Illustrator. taught by EFSC Professor in the Advanced Technologies Department

More Details Coming Soon on our Website Calendar and Facebook Events
Pre-registration is required * Spaces are limited
If you have any questions, feel free to call or text: Barbara Finneran at Arts for All Studio at 321- 749-9808.
Or email us at atforallstudio@gmail.com

ART CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

Come Join the Creative Fun!



Event Flyers

You're Invited

Join us for our upcoming virtual or in-person information sessions to learn more about the Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities Comprehensive Managed Care (ICMC) program.

DATE & TIME
TUESDAY, JANUARY 27
5:30-7PM EST
VIRTUAL

DATE & TIME
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18
5:30-7PM EST
IN-PERSON: PENSACOLA, FL

DATE & TIME
TUESDAY, MARCH 24
5:30-7PM EST
VIRTUAL

Hosted by the Agency for Healthcare Administration (AHCA), Florida Community Care (FCC), and Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities (FAPD)



AHCA **ICMC**

FLORIDA APSE **Collaboration Summit 2026**
Employment First
Employment for All

Educate. Innovate. Advocate.



Hyatt Place
St. Augustine, Vilano Beach

February
25 - 27

ONE VOICE COALITION
EMPOWERING DISABILITY COMMUNITIES

SALFORD & CO.

Waves of Acceptance
CREATE. CELEBRATE. CONNECT.
Festival

SAVE THE DATE
APRIL 25, 2026
Space Coast Field of Dreams

WWW.REALLYGREATSITE.COM






Neurodivergent Committee
Multi-State Meeting

A collaborative space for advocates, leaders, and community members supporting neurodivergent adults across state lines.

This meeting supports ongoing neurodivergent advocacy efforts within NAMI-affiliated communities.

Hosted by: NAMI EC
Facilitated by: Mandy Pinckley

Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2026
Time: 6:00 - 7:00 PM (Eastern Time)
Location: Zoom (Virtual)

Who should attend:
Anyone interested in neurodivergent advocacy, peer support, collaboration, or cross-state initiatives. All perspectives welcome.



Scan to join the Zoom meeting

Please RSVP by emailing advocatepinckley@gmail.com to receive meeting updates and materials, including the Zoom link.

