



People First of Missouri 2021 Fall Newsletter

Making Your Voice Matter

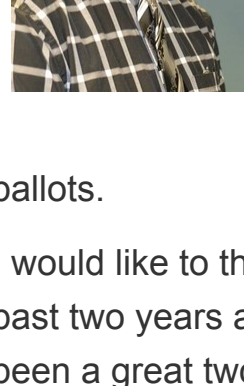
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Message from the President of People First of Missouri

It's that time of year again for election. Within a month and a half of the election, for the People First of Missouri Officers. Elections will take place during the Novembers Steering Committee meeting or prior to the meeting for those using paper or e-mailed ballots.

I would like to thank you for allowing me to represent you for these past two years as your President of People First of Missouri. It has been a great two years working with everyone.

Now that my first term is up for President of People First of Missouri. I want you all to know that this is why I am running for reelection for a second term as President of the People First of Missouri organization.

I am running for reelection because I want to finish what we have accomplished together as a state officer of People First. I have built excellent leadership skills. I have helped emcee with the Disability Rights Legislative Day in 2020.

I also have helped with planning the Disability Rights Legislative Day for 2021.

I have advocated for education issues so that students with disabilities and get an outstanding education. I have advocated for fair housing issues. I had helped one of our People First members and his family to keep their home.

I was one of Missouri's first People First members to do a SARTAC fellow project on School Pipeline to Prison. I had helped our local People First chapter of Boone County set goals for this year and last year that we accomplished in the years' time. I have reached out to help the People First chapters struggling to get back up and running. I have formed a good relationship with legislators, Local leaders that make decision-makers like the local Mayor, School Board members, a County Commissioner, and a Judge. I have worked alone side the University of Missouri - Kansas City Institute for Human Development staff by having meetings every week and meeting with the People First officers every month. I would like to see People First of Missouri continue moving forward and not going backward.

Self – Advocates, I want you to ask yourselves these questions:

- Have the officers met every month when there was no steering committee?
- Have you got all of the information to go over before the steering committee meeting?
- Have the President ever held meeting with People First of Missouri state advisory's every week like I have since I been President for the past two years?

These are some things that you must ask yourself before you decide to cast your vote for the person you would want to represent you as People First of Missouri state officers.

I was asked by some people what is my vision for People First of Missouri if I am re-elected as President. "Well, let me be very honest with you, it's not so much about what my vision is for the People First of Missouri organization. It's about what the self-advocates of the other chapters think about what idea of the organization of People First of Missouri would like to go. My job as President of People First is to make sure that the organization is going in the right direction. And that's what I continue to do if I am re-elected as President of People First of Missouri.

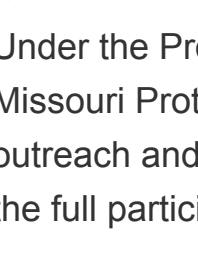
Again self – advocates, it has been wonderful representing you as President of People First. I ask you to talk to your People First local chapter's Steering Committee representative to let your voice be heard.

Thanks, Jeffrey Johnson
President of People First of Missouri.

2022-2024 Statewide Officer Nominees' Answers to Questions

If you have additional questions that you would like to ask the candidates, you can ask your questions during the upcoming Steering Committee meeting.

[Click here to view the 2022-2024 Statewide Officer Nominees Questions and Answers](#)



Legislative Priority Survey

Each year, the Governor's Council on Disability distributes a poll to gain a better understanding of the legislative issues important to Missourians with disabilities and those who work and live with them. The responses are compiled by their office and sent to state legislators and elected officials. Please fill out [the survey](#) by November 15, 2021.

Statewide Voter Education Project

Under the Protection and Advocacy for Voting Access grant ("PAVA"), Missouri Protection & Advocacy Services ("MO P&A") engages in outreach and education for voters and election authorities to promote the full participation of people with disabilities in the electoral process.

MO P&A is partnering with several disability rights organizations and direct service providers to create and promote a comprehensive voter education program tailored for voters with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the state; however, the program will not be exclusive to voters with intellectual disabilities and should benefit any voters who might experience barriers to voting.

The program will expand voting access by educating voters on registration requirements, learning about candidates and issues, accessible voting options, self-advocacy, and other ways to get involved; developing a plan for Election Day; and requesting Election Day assistance.

The program will include one virtual meeting shortly before March 9, 2022, registration deadline, and another shortly before April 5, 2022, General Municipal Election Day. Information presented at the virtual meetings, and other supplemental materials, will be publicly available online.

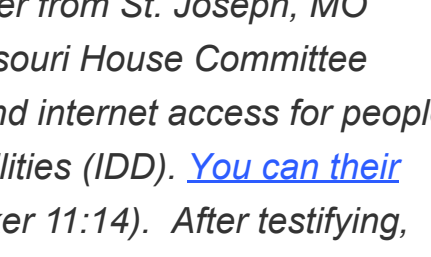
The program will be unique from voter education programs previously offered by Mo P&A because it will include referral information for transportation and, if necessary, direct Election Day assistance for attendees who would like help casting their votes.

By focusing on direct Election Day assistance, Mo P&A hopes to gauge the impact of a Missouri law that limits voting access by restricting the number of voters that an individual can assist during an election.

Missouri law permits people to assist only one voter during an election. Before completing the above-noted education program, Mo P&A would like to hear the stories of any voters who have relied on assistance from a supporter in the past. Mo P&A would also like to hear from any organizations/facilities/agencies that have provided assistance to voters or have an interest in assisting voters in the future.

For more information contact Vincent K.Heitholt at (314) 256-9591 or vincent.heitholt@mo-pa.org.

Please Congratulate People First Members from the St. Joseph Chapter of People First on Their Recent Efforts to Address the Issue with Broadband Internet Access.



Chris Fagan and Gary Clouser

From The Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council

On Monday, Chris Fagan and Gary Clouser from St. Joseph, MO partnered with MODDC to testify at a Missouri House Committee hearing about the importance of broadband internet access for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). [You can their testimony here](#) (it starts around time marker 11:14). After testifying, Chris and Gary met with Rep. Bill Falkner in his office to continue their advocacy work. Recent graduates of MODDC's Partners in Policymaking, Chris and Gary are also active in their local People First Chapter and serve as the President and Vice President, respectively. A special thank you to [Representative Louis Riggs](#) and his staff for helping coordinate this opportunity to testify.

We talked with Chris and Gary after their experience and here is what they had to say:

Why was it important to you to testify about broadband access?

We both want it for ourselves and for our friends.

What surprised you the most about testifying?

Gary: I thought there would be more questions.

Chris: Nothing actually surprised me. We were able to participate in Partners in Policymaking, which helped us learn about laws and what to expect.

What was your favorite part of your experience at the capitol?

Chris and Gary: (with a laugh we liked it all!

What is next, what do you hope to do with advocacy?

Whatever's next! (with a chuckle). We will stay involved with People First.

What is the most memorable thing about me with your Representative, Bill Falkner:

Gary: That he had time to see us.

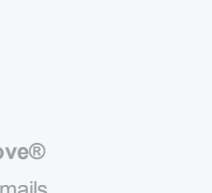
Chris: He took the time out to talk to us.

Meeting with Representative Travis Smith

MODDC was able to catch up with Representative [Travis Smith \(155th District\)](#) on Tuesday. Rep. Smith had the chance to [meet Chris and Gary](#) at their testimony Monday. His genuine enthusiasm for truly helping people is apparent both in his record of accomplishments and his conversations. He heard Chris and Gary testify and felt impacted by what they had to say. "I couldn't believe their internet and cable costs them nearly \$200 per month," said Rep. Smith. It is this barrier and others like it that we were able to discuss. Rep. Smith is a strong ally for MODDC and is eager to learn more about how can be an ally for MODDC in the legislature.

Applications are open for the 2022 Partners in Policymaking class.

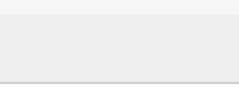
Find more information [on their website](#) or email kstaeger-wilson@moddcouncil.org



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