



SCRIBE'S LEGISLATIVE VOICE



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ABATE OF FLORIDA, INC.

WELCOME TO THE LEGISLATIVE VOICE

August is such an interesting month for us in ABATE. It is the slowest time when it comes to what is happening in the Legislature, Yet it should be the busiest time for the Legislative Trustees in each Chapter (more on that below). It is a time when each Chapter has a new Board of Directors, some old some new. Vacations are taken and school is just around the corner. I would like to thank you for taking a few moments to glance through this edition of the Legislative Voice. P.S. I need Legislators who would like to be in our Legislator's Corner.

DARRIN "SCRIBE" BROOKS, *State Legislative Trustee*, ABATE of Florida, Inc.

OUR MOST PRODUCTIVE TIME OF THE YEAR

Now that the Legislators are back in their districts we need to get busy and go out and meet and greet them and their staff. Now is the best time to invite them to come and address your Chapter meeting. Let them get to know about your Chapter and ABATE of Florida. Educate them that your Chapter is a true cross section of their districts. Let them know about the different occupations that are in your Chapter so that they will understand that even though we are bikers, we are not just one segment of society. Tell them how many registered voters are in your Chapter and in ABATE state wide. Mention that we are "super voters" since we always vote in every

election. The connections that you make now will reduce the amount of "catch-up" work you will have to do during the hectic legislative session.

We should reach out to every candidate for every office from Fire Commission to U.S. Congress. After all, almost all the politicians of the higher offices started out on the local commissions and boards. We need to make friendly in roads to the local officials as an investment in our future and to help stave off what happened in Delray Beach. You will remember that it was a Mayor that wanted to impose a ban on motorcycles in downtown Delray Beach.



CREATE A "SIGNATURE"

I strongly recommend that each of you create a "signature" on your e-mail program. It looks so professional to have at the bottom of each of your letters your name, Board Position, and Chapter Name. You can even include a favorite quote that you can change from time to time. This is another way of getting your Chapter recognized. If you do not know how to do this ask your Chapter's Internet Guru (every Chapter has one). This will not only help when you e-mail your legislators, but it will help when you send me an e-mail. As you all know I am new to you and you are new to me, so it will help to know all your information instead of just having the e-mail signed "Stinky".

The Use of Postcards To Dramatically Increase Your Legislative Effectiveness

I have talked before about how the use of simple postcards can help your chapter reach out more effectively to your legislators. One Chapter spent \$25 on 500 white postcards that had both the Chapter and State logo printed on it. At a Chapter meeting the postcards were pasted out and each member wrote a brief hand written message to their Legislator. The Legislative

Trustee then followed this up a few days later with either a call of visit to the legislators district offices. He was very amazed at the positive response he received from the staff. Several staff members stated that they will always remember the Chapters logo and how powerful it was to receive so many hand written cards.

The postcards can also be used to thanking new

advertisers, welcome new members, and thank supporters for helping the Chapter during an event. All of these are simple ways to promote a positive perception of your Chapter and ABATE to your community. Let me know what other ideas you have for the use of postcards and if you use them, let me know how they work for you.

"Government's first duty is to protect the people, not run their lives." - Ronald Reagan

LEGISLATOR'S CORNER

I would like to welcome Sen. Dave Aronberg (D - Ft. Myers) into this month's Legislative Corner, When I told Doc Reichenbach who was in our corner, Doc said "Sen. Aronberg has been a friend to ABATE for the entire time that he has been in the Legislature." This upcoming session will be Sen. Aronberg's last as a State Senator because he is running for Florida's State Attorney General.

Dave Aronberg was born and raised in South Florida and attended public schools before going off to Harvard for college, then Harvard Law School, where he graduated with honors in 1996. As an attorney, he worked closely with Insurance Commissioner (now U.S. Senator) Bill Nelson to investigate European insurance companies that refused to honor World War II-era policies sold to victims of the Holocaust. In 1999, Dave became a Florida Assistant Attorney General for economic crimes. Among other cases, he headed the State's lawsuit against "Miss Cleo," the "Jamaican Shango Shaman psychic" who had become an international celebrity among late-night television viewers.



DAVE ARONBERG
D - Ft. Myers

Elected to the Florida Senate in November 2002, Senator Aronberg represents a challenging, diverse district that stretches from eastern Palm Beach County through Glades, Hendry and Charlotte Counties all the way to Lee County on Florida's gulf coast. Even though Democrats comprise only 38% of his district, Dave was re-elected in 2008 with 59% of the vote.

I recently spoke with Sen. Aronberg about one of his areas of concern that many people have talked to me about and his response is something that I asked him to share with all the members of ABATE of Florida, Inc.

Sen. Aronberg - From an \$89 million loss on a failed attempt to revamp the state's financial system, to the well-publicized mismanagement of the State's human resource system, Florida has learned that when it comes to privatizing government functions, taxpayers often pay more in the end.

Recently, we learned that the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) spent more than \$3 million to pursue a failed plan to lease Alligator Alley to a private, foreign-owned company for 75 years, despite data indicating Florida taxpayers would lose in such a deal. This is an unacceptable waste of Floridians' hard-earned dollars and a stubborn refusal by Tallahassee bureaucrats to learn from previous mistakes.

Last summer, when I first learned of the expedited plan to sell Alligator Alley to foreign-financed companies, I was concerned about higher tolls, lowered maintenance and a national security risk. I immediately asked FDOT to have this high stakes plan reviewed by the Council on Efficient Government, which analyzes every other state agency's privatization proposal. My request was denied. I couldn't believe FDOT refused to do its homework on this massive deal, and was incredibly disappointed that the State would jeopardize our national security by selling our roads to private, foreign-financed companies. To make matters worse, the deal was being rushed through before anyone had crunched the numbers to see if the plan was in the best financial interest of our state.

Over the past year, I've used every tool at my disposal, from public records requests, legislation and amendments to stop this deal and ensure that future plans have proper oversight. Although the initial negotiations for Alligator Alley have stalled, the project, and others like it, can still rear their ugly heads. Let's work together to make sure that FDOT doesn't lose their notes from this lesson the next time they try such an ill-advised plan.

If your local Legislator would like to be a part of our newsletter, please let me know. I would be more than happy to put them in our "Legislator's Corner".

