
VIRGINIA BOARD FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Commonwealth of Virginia

Board Policy 9.0: Board Spokesperson

It is the policy of the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (the Board) to have a uniform and consistent voice when communicating Board positions to the Governor, legislators, policymakers, and the public. Policy 9.0 seeks to set forth the circumstances under which Board members and staff may speak on behalf of the Board.

I. Board Spokespersons

- A. Individuals authorized to speak on behalf of the Board are the Board Chair and the Executive Director.
 - 1. The Board Chair and the Executive Director shall have the authority to act and speak on behalf of the Board consistent with formal positions taken by the Board.
 - 2. The Board Chair and the Executive Director shall have the authority to act and speak on behalf of the Board in instances in which a formal position has not been taken by the Board as long as the position taken by the Executive Director or Board Chair is consistent with previous Board positions and/or the philosophy of the Developmental Disabilities and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (DD Act).
 - 3. Any position taken by the Board Chair or the Executive Director which is inconsistent with previous Board positions or the DD Act shall be communicated to the Executive Committee with a justification for having taken the position.
- B. The Executive Director shall have the authority to delegate to Board staff, authorization to speak on behalf of the Board consistent with A (2) above.
- C. The Board Chair shall have the authority to delegate to other Board members, authorization to speak on behalf of the Board, subject to A (2) above.
- D. Board members who are serving as an official Board representative to a workgroup, task force or other entity are authorized to speak on behalf of the board subject to A (2) above.

II. General Communication by Board Members

- A. All Board members shall have the authority and are encouraged to communicate in a variety of arenas information about the Board and its activities: to promote the work of the Board; to distribute information about the Board; and to solicit input about Board activities and goals.
- B. Board members have the right, as citizens, to communicate policy and advocacy positions. In doing so, the Board member must ensure that he/she is not representing the position as a Board position, unless the member has been specifically authorized to speak on behalf of the Board, per Section I above.

III. Response to Alerts and Written Board positions

- A. Correspondence to policymakers or correspondence intended for widespread public distribution, initiated by Board staff, which states or appears to represent a position of Board, may be approved by the Executive Director when (1) the position stated represents a clearly approved Board position, or (2) the position represents a logical outcome of a Board position and the matter is not considered controversial among the majority of Board members.
- B. The Executive Director may issue/approve responses to Alerts on behalf of the Board requested by the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) or other advocacy organizations when such responses are in line with Board positions, or consistent with the DD Act, and would not be controversial among the majority of Board members.
- C. The Executive Director, at his/her discretion, may defer approval of correspondence or response to an alert in favor of approval by the Board Chair or the Board as a whole.
- D. Correspondence or communication of written positions in any format in the above situations shall be signed by either of the following:
 - 1. the Executive Director
 - 2. the Board Chair
 - 3. the Executive Director and the Chair jointly
- E. Positions taken in writing which are recognized as potentially controversial by a majority of Board Members shall be subject to review by the full Board. Where there is a need for a more immediate response, approval may be provided by the majority of the Executive Committee through an in person or telephonic meeting. In the case of a telephonic meeting, provisions of the Freedom of Information Act for public access to the telephone meeting must be observed.

- F. Individual Board members may not respond to alerts or send correspondence on behalf of the Board unless they have been authorized by the Board Chair to do so, consistent with Section I above.

Adopted by the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities
Date: May 5, 2004