

April 21, 2009

City of Long Beach
City Council Meeting

Re: Long Beach Community Television

The following testimony is submitted in support of reinstating Long Beach Community Television under PEG funding

My name is Steve Long. I am co-producer with Lloyd Saposnek of the Transitions and Abilities program. We have been producing this program since 1994 on the disability community and its issues, success stories, resources, and on people successfully living with disabilities in the community in an effort to demystify old stereotypes and to educate the public and the disability community on positive role models and references to people with disabilities.

We have been the only media access for people with disabilities in Long Beach that has covered emerging issues in the disability community. When there was resistance to implementing the civil rights legislative directives of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Transitions & Abilities presented a "fair and balanced" debate on this issue with a representative from the City of Long Beach's Disability Access Appeals Board and with a disability activist from the community. When we discovered that people who were severely disabled were being physically and mentally abused, and taken advantage of by their personal care assistants (attendants), including physical abuse we presented a forum for the person who had been

abused, including his story of broken bones and the complete loss of control of his personal life, in an effort to inform the community and people with disabilities, specifically, that there are resources and support systems to escape such dangerous conditions. When budget proposals were targeted at cutting State Regional Center funding for programs for developmentally disabled—intellectually disabled, clients with autism, cerebral palsy, and epilepsy from the Association of Retarded Citizens, Arts and Services for Disabled, and other local organizations serving developmentally disabled, Transitions and Abilities produced a program that showed the impact such cuts would have on this community in terms of reducing or eliminating unique social-work day programs that are otherwise unavailable in the community for this special population. We have produced special programs on the problems many female veterans experience on discharge from the military, including post traumatic stress disorder and sexual trauma which have made reintegration into the community very difficult, but possible with special new programs which Transitions and Abilities highlighted. A final comment on the programming we have done over the years under Long Beach Community Television have been the programs hosted by Patti Kolpa. Patti is deaf. She works as a job developer at the Long Beach Career Transition Center, assisting clients who are deaf find employment. From my professional experience helping people who are deaf find work takes special skills and sensitivity, and the willingness to challenge employers' misperceptions. Patti's enthusiasm, caring, and personal evidence of integrating into the community come through loud and clear when she hosts Transitions

and Abilities, in which she serves as an outstanding role model for the deaf community which is rarely seen on commercial television.

The absence the Transitions and Abilities program in Long Beach has left a vast vacuum for the citizens with disabilities living in Long Beach with no commercial programming to fill this vacuum or programming within the City to replace our program.

We recognize the impact created by the "The Digital Infrastructure and Video Competition Act" (DIVCA) of 2006 which we feel contraverts the original directive granting cable companies access to city airwaves with the proviso that a minimal amount of their budget be set aside for community television programming. We also recognize that PEG funding is available and we, the Long Beach Community Television Producers Association, are the only entity with a library of existing programs and the immediate capability of resuming programming. As producers representing the broad and diverse community of Long Beach we realistically consider our proposal to be the most cost effective and realistic alternative to making the best use of Peg funding.

Respectfully submitted by:

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