

Shawn Casey O'Brien Candidate Statement

My name is Shawn Casey O'Brien.

For the last 7 years I've been a co-host/co-producer of KPFK's disability awareness show: Access Unlimited.

As Executive Director of the Unique People's Voting Project for 9 years, I was instrumental in getting over 100,000 disabled citizens registered and out to vote. And I continue to fight for the voting and civil rights of people with disabilities throughout California. In other words, I take my democracy very seriously and should I be elected to the Station's Local Board, I will work assiduously to increase the democratic participation of KPFK's subscribers and staff in their Local Board elections.

First, by making sure that during every fund drive, we repeatedly point out that one of the main benefits of membership to KPFK is that people who donate also get to vote in our local elections. Most of our subscribers don't realize that their donation entitles them to cast a vote in local BD elections. We must let them know. During our fund drives we must repeatedly drive home that very point. KPFK not only needs their money but also needs their vote! Thus, the idea of donating and participation in our elections becomes one in the minds of our subscribers.

Besides increased participation in our elections, such an effort would very likely expand the composition of the Local Board to better reflect our community as a whole, as well as make it that much harder for any one small group or another to hijack our dismally low turn-out elections as is currently the practice.

I'd see to it that all ballots sent to subscribers include a return postage paid envelope. If we can give subscribers a returned postage paid envelope to send us their money, we ought to do the same for their ballots.

Finally, I and my co-hosts on "Access Unlimited" take the issue of access very seriously and have worked for years to make KPFK and its upstairs archives accessible to all our colleagues and guests. After years of having funds for an elevator deferred, I and many others, who understand that "Justice delayed is justice denied," are happy to say that money has been budgeted and KPFK is now committed to becoming totally accessible.

As a LSB member I will make sure that happens in the quickest, most efficient, cost-effective fashion possible.

I do this not just for the disabled community, but for the whole community. Quite simply, I intend to watch out for everybody's future.

With the aging of America, KPFK must be in the forefront of protecting and promoting the civil rights of people with disabilities

â€” not because it's the law, but because it's the right and the smart thing to do, if we are to realistically meet the access needs of the community we serve now and in the near future.

I'm running to strengthen democracy and participation at KPFK and prepare it for a future accessible to everyone. If you share my vision, I'd appreciate your vote. Thank you.