



## Why Senior Advocacy in Brevard County

By Joe Steckler, *President, Helping Seniors of Brevard County*

I often write about unmet senior needs in Brevard, many of which were uncovered in a 1996 countywide survey. Why haven't we fixed them in 24 years? Partly because of the failure of those we elect to the Florida House and Senate to act in our best interests. Years ago I ran unsuccessfully for the State Representative seat vacated by the death of Howard Futch. I had many admonish me for making a late run, saying I could accomplish more as a voice for seniors. Now, after 20 years, I agree with those who told me to become a senior advocate.

Since founding Helping Seniors of Brevard in 2011 and becoming an advocate for seniors, I am convinced that more can be done at the local level. Especially when those we elect to build a State budget, pass laws, and represent us seem to be playing a shell game with the funds entrusted to them. Here I refer to the oft cited Sadowski fund, which was developed to build affordable housing but seems to be a target for General Revenue programs. For the past 20 years legislators have bilked the fund for approximately \$115 million annually.

Besides highlighting the need for term limits, what I am saying is that a lot more could be done if these dollars were used for the purpose intended – matching locally developed monies across Florida to build affordable housing, which could then be managed through low income rent dollars. Consider for a moment the amount of monies that Brevard would collect if these dollars were allocated by the number of seniors per county. We can fix this not through wishful thinking but by concerted action.

A Senior Advocacy Council needs leadership, goals and objectives, committed staff, and an established meeting place. Zon Assisted Living Facility has provided a place to meet. The Senior Resource Center is also home ported (Navy term) there. Several objectives can accrue from an Advocacy Council:

- Development of a Brevard County Aging Plan
- Unification of seniors in affairs affecting seniors
- Building of low cost housing
- Creation of a senior responsive transportation program
- Identification of senior needs

These are just a few of the objectives to be identified and funded, but nothing will be accomplished unless we seniors advocate for it. Call 321-473-7770 and become



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part of the solution to a long standing set of problems in a county with one of the highest number of seniors in the nation. While failure to correct unmet needs can be laid to elected state and local officials, it also can be attributed to our failure to unify. Make that call – 321-473-7770 – and become a senior advocate.

Contact Helping Seniors at 321-473-7770, at [www.HelpingSeniorsofBrevard.org](http://www.HelpingSeniorsofBrevard.org), or at P.O. Box 372936, Satellite Beach, FL 32937. ☎

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entitled to inherit a majority of the estate's assets.

In addition to allowing you to select who will inherit your property and administer your estate, the probate process is normally smoother with a Will. For example, with a Will you can: 1] give the Personal Representative the power to sell real estate without first obtaining a court order, and 2] waive the necessity of having the Personal Representative post a surety bond.

For further information on estate planning you may be interested in Attorney Truman Scarborough's Booklet on Estate Planning in Florida. It is available without charge or obligation by calling 321-267-4770. His office is located at 239 Harrison Street, Titusville, Florida. ☎