# Nothing About Us, Without Us K

Your K, places the abled body as the foreground of disability advocacy. This robs the disabled body of agency over itself and reinforces the belief that the active participation of disabled people in the actual legislative debate is irrelevant to the ability of the government to legislate well. This involves a profound moral violence and a procedurally incoherent approach to policy.

**Wasserman et al** [David Wasserman is Director of Research at the Center for Ethics at Yeshiva University.], David, Asch, Adrienne, Blustein, Jeffrey and Putnam, Daniel, "Disability: Definitions, Models, Experience", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/disability/>. **The first-hand experience** of stigmatization **may confer two sorts of authority** on people with disabilities**.** The **first** is epistemic. **There should be “nothing about us without us” because any discussion of**, or research into, **disability not informed by that experience would** likely **be inaccurate and misguided.** For example, discussions of well-being that do not take into account the perspective of disabled people may assume that their level of happiness or satisfaction is much lower than it in fact is, or that it is lower mainly because of difficulties directly attributable to impairments rather than attitudes and social barriers. This is but one application of the more general issue of first-person authority: the extent to which people have special or privileged knowledge of their own mental states and experiences [see SEP entry on “Self-Knowledge”]. Although this is a subject of great controversy in the philosophy of mind, there is widespread agreement that, at minimum, first-person ascriptions of mental states carry a defeasible presumption of correctness. But there is an additional epistemic reason for according significant weight to the first-hand reports of people with disabilities. The observations and judgments of all stigmatized minorities are frequently discounted, but **[for] people with disabilities** face a distinct handicap. **There is a** powerful**, pervasive tendency, among philosophers, social scientists, and laypeople to dismiss their self-appraisals as reflecting ignorance, self-deception, defensive exaggeration, or courageous optimism** [see SEP entry on “Feminist Perspectives on Disability”, Sec. 3]. Giving those self-appraisals heightened attention and deference may be an appropriate and effective way to counteract or correct for that tendency. Epistemic authority thus provides a good reason for encouraging disabled people to speak about their experiences and for nondisabled people to listen when they do. But there is another reason as well: **people who suffer stigmatization**, disrespect, and discrimination **have a moral claim to be heard that is independent of the accuracy of their testimony.** **Even if someone lacking those experiences could convey them accurately** and vividly, **she would not be an adequate substitute** for those who had the experiences. **The experience** of stigmatization, like the experience of other forms of oppression, **calls for recognition, and thereby may impose a duty on those fortunate enough to have avoided such experiences** to listen closely to those who have had them. **To settle for second-hand accounts** of those experiences or to ignore them altogether **seems disrespectful** to the victims. The conviction that the oppressed have a right to a hearing lies behind the recent proliferation of Truth Commissions and tribunals. It also helps explain the frustration of crime and torture victims denied an opportunity to tell their stories, even when their oppressors receive punishment without their testimony. Though few **disability advocates** would demand a tribunal for the routine indignities of life with disabilities in developed countries, most **demand a far greater voice in** the media depiction of people with disabilities, in research about them, and in **policies** concerning or **affecting them.**

And this has pre-fait implications beyond just the effect of the plan. Your choice to replicate this legislative discussion within an academic and philosophical investigation replicates the same oppressive systems of academia and philosophy. Just ask my coach how difficult it is to get into a PhD program in philosophy with dyslexia, no chance it could not have happened if he had not been super fortunate in his one in a hundred chance of being able to do debate. **Silvers**, Anita, "Feminist Perspectives on Disability", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/feminism-disability/>. For example, **feminist epistemology is a** philosophically **innovative reform** movement **that can serve as a beacon for the philosophical investigation of disability**, although as of this writing the significance of disability for an adequate epistemology has not been much explored in disability scholarship, neither in the philosophical study of disability or in disability studies generally. Some feminist philosophers (and some feminist psychologists as well) have argued that women have ways of knowing that differ from men's. (For psychologists, see Belenky et al. 1986 and Tannen 1990; for philosophers, see Code 1991 and Ruddick 1989) Tannen, for example, adduces evidence from sociolinguistic research to argue that environments conducive to women's learning differ from those appropriate for men. More generally, some theorists influenced by such accounts have characterized women as being alienated, unsatisfied, and unconvinced when held to traditional epistemology's paradigm of the isolated knower, with its detached, universalizing, and controlling approach to knowledge. Dissatisfaction with this kind of view has prompted feminist epistemological insights about the possibilities for achieving objectivity without insisting that cognition works or should work the same way for everyone, as well as about the importance of situating, contextualizing, and nuancing truths, and about the benefits of collaborative practices of achieving knowledge. (See section 2. “Social Models of Knowers” in SEP entry on Feminist Social Epistemology for references.) In developing their insights, feminist epistemologists have addressed the influence on knowledge of the social situations of knowers. **Situatedness cannot be just a matter of the social positioning** of knowers, however, or of their histories or cultures. **What we know is modulated by how we acquire** the elements of **knowledge**, **and these** processes **are shaped by the condition of the body** as well as by social conditions. **Cognitive skills are expressions of development** in various areas of the brain, which in turn is responsive to the rest of the body. We **therefore** may expect that **people with disabilities**, whose bodies diverge from the species-typical kind, also sometimes **will develop** cognitive **approaches and abilities that differ from** most **other people's.** Parenthetically, in one of the exceedingly rare instances of a philosopher treating an impairment as something other than a deficit, the 18th century experimentalist philosopher Denis Diderot investigated blind people's ways of knowing (Diderot 1999 [1749], Curran 2013). Taking a stance that resembles, if not prefigures, recent feminist criticisms of Descartes, Diderot, in his “Letter on the Blind for the Use of Those Who See,” describes how blind people know about the world to show the short-comings of Cartesian over-reliance on metaphors that associate reason with light or sight and Cartesian reliance on visual rather than tactile ways of knowing. Traditionally, of course, philosophers have dismissed disabled people's claims to knowledge about subjects touched by the limitations of their particular impairments. A telling illustration is given in the correspondence between philosophers Bryan Magee and Martin Milligan, in which Magee simply dismisses, absent argument, Milligan's report and arguments that, although blind almost from birth and without visual memories of experiencing specific colors, he fully understands the meaning of “red” (Magee and Milligan 1996). Here Magee portrays Milligan as a defective knower because of his blindness, a conclusion Magee advances with assertions that Milligan's experiences with redness are not exactly like Magee's own. Yet it is tendentious to point out that blind-from-birth individuals do not develop visual processing skills, and then to intimate that they must be epistemologically inferior to, or that their modes of knowing cannot rise to the epistemological significance of, sighted people. To the contrary, in some born-blind people, for instance, the area of the brain associated in most other people with visual processing appears instead to be a site for aural processing, meaning that a much larger part of the brain is available for dealing with information obtained through hearing than is the case for sighted people. This biological difference is thought to explain why in many cultures blind individuals are taken to be endowed with legendary skills for remembering and transmitting the spoken word accurately and with heightened understanding of orally transmitted texts, Thus blind bards who preserve and perform lengthy gospels or narratives from an authoritative standpoint are familiar figures in the history of many cultures (O'Neil 2003). There are other blind people who know objects in their physical environment by echolocation, having cultivated the skill of making clicking noises with their tongues and identifying the different qualities of sounds bounced back toward them (Tresniowski and Arias 2006 [in Other Internet Resources]; see also “Shattering Barriers” at the World Access for the Blind website, in Other Internet Resources). Belgium's police force includes blind detectives who can listen to criminals' recorded conversations and by the reverberations of sound identify what kind of room they occupy, whether they are using a landline or cell phone, and even what kind of car they are traveling in or whether the suspect's Flemish carries an Albanian rather than a Moroccan accent (Soares 2007). Sighted people's typical lack of functional ability to navigate by reverberated sound, and thus their inferior way of knowing the absorption/reflection properties of the physical objects that surround them, and their deafness to nuances of spoken sound, surely should be recognized as a disadvantage. Yet this is almost never so, even where sighted people must find their way in the dark or distinguish among interlocutors beyond their vision. **The experiences of people diagnosed** **with cognitive impairments** also usually **are dismissed as epistemologically defective**, judged against the philosophical ideal of the rational thinker. Some people described as cognitively impaired have anomalous patterns of cognitive skills, in some ways failing to attain, but in other ways exceeding, levels typical for the species. For example, individuals with Down Syndrome, who think abstractly only with difficulty or not at all, sometimes have greater than usual skills in perceiving, and remembering, the concrete details of what they see or hear. And people with Williams Syndrome quite often have greater social and emotional intelligence than is species-typical for humans, as well as unusual musical facility. This is not even to mention the innovative insightfulness and creativity achieved by individuals with diagnoses of various kinds of psychoses and similar so-called mental disabilities, conditions experienced by many famed artists, writers and musicians. Such individuals usually are exempted from philosophy's scope as, for example, when epistemological theory discounts the judgments of blind people as irrelevant or unimportant to philosophical accounts of empirical knowledge, as philosopher Magee dismisses philosopher Milligan.. And people who lack abstract thinking skills, thereby diverging from the kind of human capability philosophers themselves exercise so well and enjoy so greatly, usually are dismissed as unimportant, that is, as not rising to philosophical considerability. People whose cognitive anomalies impede them from arriving at and articulating complex and rationalized accounts of their own good very often are not accorded full status, and sometimes even are denied considerability, by moral and political theories, including pluralistic liberal theories committed to respecting citizens' diverse values. (See McMahan 2005 and Kittay 2005) Yet, as Francis and Silvers (Francis and Silvers 2007, Silvers and Francis 2009) have pointed out, normally autonomous individuals do not arrive at, nor do they express, notions of their own good in isolation from, or independent of, their interactions with other people. Conceptualizations of the good of cognitively impaired people, developed through structurally similar collaborative interactions between them and others, deserve equal consideration in moral and political philosophy. To account for the misfit between philosophical paradigms and their realities, the testimony or example of outliers such as blind people, and people with Down Syndrome or Williams Syndrome, typically is disallowed on the ground that it must be inherently flawed where it challenges or deviates from philosophical theory. Yet to disregard the standpoints, and thereby the performances and reports of the experienced world, of unusual people impoverishes philosophizing by diminishing the epistemological adequacy of philosophical accounts. Further, as an application of Miranda Fricker's analysis of epistemic injustice shows, the practice of systematically discounting belief claims made by people with disabilities should be condemned as testimonial injustice: individuals are wronged based on their disability status when they when they aspire to roles as knowers (see Fricker 2009). **Nor**, to apply a lesson from feminist philosophy of science, **can objective knowledge about disability be produced unless disabled people,** including people with cognitive disabilities, **are fully respected members of the community of inquirers** (see Longino 2001). Francis and Silvers have proposed an approach to constructing ideas of the good with full respect for and inclusion of the viewpoints of severely disabled persons (Francis and Silvers 2006, Silvers and Francis 2009).

In case it is not already clear, your authors being disabled absolutely does not solve the K.

1. You are not able to embody or convey their lived experience which is an important factor in any engagement on these policy questions. Even if you bring in some of their ideas you do so at the cost of divorcing it from the embodied experience.
2. You pick and choose which cards you read. This means that their ability to be heard in this round is subject to our ability to ‘read them.’ That is not a voice, when the abled are the gatekeepers that determine which of your arguments are included you cannot be said to be meaningfully included in the discussion.
3. This entrenches the notion of the disabled perspective as static. You get to pick and choose which arguments to go for based on my arguments, you can kick some arguments or change your position, however what your authors say is utterly static as though they cannot engage in ‘deliberation’ or ‘conversation’ but just have a position which can be taken by another as their exhaustive advocacy.

And this outweighs the impact analysis of the aff.

1. Your offense begs the question, if we cannot adequately assess the desirability of the policy from your perspective you cannot weigh the offense against my position.
2. Your offense can be resolved in other frameworks. I am all for discussion of ableism, the problem is the way you choose to discuss ableism in an activity that has massive structural and performative barriers to the participation of lots of people with disability. Actually go talk or engage with a disabled person rather than using the debate space as a way to continue the external legislation of the disabled body.
3. You cannot resolve the root problem, you claim that we will show society that disabled workers work is valuable and should be paid for, that’s great and now we get to commodity and use them for our business. How about instead we realize that their will and thoughts are things to be engaged with as agents who have control over their own body. There is a reason so much violence is done to disabled bodies in the medical field, because it is often assumed they don’t have the quality of mind necessary to consent.

And in case you really want an off for flow purposes: Vote negative to reject the affirmative’s rhetorical, ideological, and political re-entrenchmant of ableism. This is as far as we should currently go. I am not going to stand here and tell you this is the policy that will be help disabled people get involved in politics, or that I have a way to help the ‘voice’ of the unvoiced be heard. However, my advocacy here is not a mere rejection of the aff. I am advocating for something positive, just not the idea that we as a community currently dominated by abled bodies figure out how to solve either the problems in politics or debate. If you want the ‘positive’ formulation of my alt its: Stop theorizing about and legislating upon disabled bodies in a community from which they are currently excluded and after the tournament go and discuss with a disabled person about their experience advocating for themself.

Turn to aff; my NC controls the internal link to the aff. When we do something for disable people that we think they need, even when it is good it is always coopted as charitable gift which dehumanizes. This means your aff cannot possibly solve and actual makes the situation worse.

**Goldfish**. Blogging Against Disablism Day 2014 - Against "Awareness" Diary of a Goldfish. April 30 2014. I've written before about the way that **doing anything for disabled people, including** normal **things** that family members, **friends** and colleagues **do for one another all the time, can be framed as care and take on a special charitable status. Give your non-disabled friend a lift? That's a favour. Give your disabled friend a lift? That's care, have a medal, bask in the warm-fuzzy of your own philanthropy.** **Thus all interactions with disabled people become tainted with this idea of charity. Employers imagine that employing disabled people would be an act of generosity** and compassion, **rather than shrewd recruitment.** Accessibility is not a matter of fairness, but kindness, and can this organisation afford to be kind? Governments are able to frame disability benefits and social service support as a matter of charity, discussing deserving and undeserving cases, as opposed to straight-forward eligibility. **This is a major factor in the abuse of disabled people,** with disabled women twice as likely and disabled children three times as likely to experience domestic abuse than their non-disabled peers. **Stand next to a disabled person and you'll be assumed to be their carer. Live with one and you'll be assumed to be a saint** (see above, re the New Malden murders).

The aff also massively increases this in the squo. The fact that you must pay more to hire a disabled worker than a non-disabled worker will mean it will almost excluslively seen a as a charity case.