



Hi, I am Craig Blackburn and I graduated from high school with a regular high school diploma in 2000.

I began a motivational career after high school and have traveled throughout the US and internationally delivering the message of ability, inclusion, and participation in life for all.

I have lived, independently, in my own condo in Metairie, Louisiana for fourteen years.

I had a commitment ceremony with the love of my life, Heather Hancock-Blackburn on the beach in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. We live in different states as either of us moving to the others state would result in both the loss and reduction of benefits which we both need. We communicate on a daily basis and see each other as often as possible. I have had my dream job for the past six years working for the NBA team the New Orleans Pelicans and now for the NFL team the New Orleans Saints as a member of the equipment teams. I love my job and working with the staff at both organizations.

My family has been involved in grassroots advocacy for many years and once I was able to communicate and speak for myself and others, I began my grassroots advocacy.

I have been involved at the local, state, and national level advocating on issues that will result in better lives for individuals with Special Needs.

An issue Heather and I have a personal connection to and have advocated for is: **Eliminating Marriage Penalty in SSI Act" (EMPSA)** which would exclude a spouse's income and resources when determining eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Passage of this Act would permit others like Heather and I to be legally married without reduction or loss of benefits. Please co-sponsor and support this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Craig Blackburn

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