



Position Statements

The Society has approved the following positions on public issues by a majority vote of the membership:

Affirmative Action

The Athena Society favors ongoing action to remove barriers and secure access to the full range of educational, employment and economic opportunities for all people. Therefore, Athena advocates affirmative action programs.

Choice

The Athena Society supports the position that the decision to have an abortion is a personal one. Further, this decision should be an informed choice. Consistent with this position, Athena opposes any governmental interferences with an individual's right to decide when or if she should bear children.

Day Care

Concerned with the ongoing need for day care programs outside the household and schools and an anticipated increase in those needs due to our economy, where it is common for both parents to work and for children to grow up in one-parent families, the Athena Society adopts the following guidelines for action:

1. That families have access to services that:
 - A. Are based on a sliding scale of fees adjusted to income to accommodate low income families;
 - B. Incorporate research-based and expanded screening to assess the developmental progress and special needs of all school age children; and
 - C. Provide adequately for children with special needs including those related to illness or injury.
2. That day care centers are accessible by public transportation at hours necessary for parents to maintain employment and for children to continue in school or that alternative transportation strategies be developed.
3. That children have access to centers in close proximity to their homes, schools, or parents' workplaces. That legislation encourage private enterprise and public agencies to establish day care centers by offering appropriate incentives (e.g., grants-in-aid, tax adjustments, etc.).



Diversity and Inclusion

The Athena Society is committed to policies and actions that value and promote diversity, inclusivity, and differences in race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, ability, and gender. We advocate for justice for all.

Early Childhood Development (adopted 3/2021)

Early childhood development is critically important in fostering brain development, healthy and nurturing relationships with others, and empathic understanding, and is also foundational in raising healthy, well-adjusted, societally conscious, economically responsible, productive, and prosocial individuals. Research has demonstrated that children who are poor, learning disabled, and members of under-represented groups, and those who perform poorly in school and are identified as behavioral problems, are at significantly greater risk of being incarcerated than their more affluent and better-positioned counterparts. Accordingly, the Athena Society supports education, outreach, and services for parents, caregivers, educators, and social services providers to promote early childhood development, to reduce adverse childhood events (ACEs), and to promote resilience in children who have been exposed to traumatic events.

Educational Funding

Recognizing that the strength of our democracy is based on the strength of our educational system, the Athena Society supports the following:

1. Fully funding programs that allow all students the ability to maximize their potential; and
2. Providing resources for teacher salaries that attract and retain the best and brightest.

Equal Rights Amendment

The Athena Society supports the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

Indigent Health Care

The Athena Society supports access to quality, uninterrupted health care for all citizens and believes that indigent health care should be supported by a percentage of the sales tax in Hillsborough County.



Gun Safety

Preventing gun violence is not a 2nd Amendment issue; it is a nonpartisan public safety issue. The Athena Society believes the proliferation of handgun and semi-automatic assault weapons in our community may contribute to a major health and safety threat to its citizens. The Athena Society supports a common sense public safety agenda to include legislation that will:

1. Support licensing procedures for gun ownership by private citizens to include:
 - a. a waiting period for background checks,
 - b. personal identity verification,
 - c. gun safety education, and,
 - d. an annual license renewal.

The license fee should be adequate to bear the cost of education and verification.

2. Enforce strict penalties for the improper possession of, and crimes committed with, handguns and assault weapons,
3. Prohibit military-style assault weapons and high-capacity magazines from our streets,
4. Make gun trafficking a federal crime, and
5. Allocate resources to better educate, support and ensure best practices by gun dealers.

Pay Equity

Concerned with the undervaluation of female-dominated jobs, a situation made more acute by the escalating percentage of femaleheaded households, and a key factor in feminization of poverty, the Athena Society believes that a system of pay equity or comparable worth should be instituted in government, industry, and the professions in all positions which lend themselves to objective ranking.

Racial Equity & Justice

The Athena Society is concerned with the systemic and structural wealth inequity, inequality and the injustices that Black people endure today, stemming from over 400 years of racism including slavery, Black Codes, Jim Crow, white terror, federal policies, racist laws, voter suppression and disproportionate incarceration. The Athena Society rejects racist beliefs, behaviors, policies and practices; and embraces the development of antiracist policies and actions that ensure racial equity and justice for Black people within all spaces including, but not limited to, workplaces, neighborhoods, governing boards, courtrooms, schools, healthcare institutions, and civic arenas.



Sexual Harassment

Recognizing that the Athena Society's fundamental purpose is to enhance the success of women, the Society condemns unwanted and unwelcome sexual conduct of all types. The Athena Society applauds those victims of sexual harassment who have had the courage to come forward to name their abusers and condemns secret payments by harassers to victims in an effort to buy their silence. The Society further recommends transparency to prevent secret payments by abusers to victims of sexual harassment and to institute appropriate penalties with due regard for the rights of victims to confidentiality and privacy.

The Athena Society strongly encourages all governmental agencies, educational institutions, and all for-profit and not-for-profit entities, whether public or private, to adopt or to review an existing sexual harassment prevention policy and to enforce such policies. The Society also strongly encourages all governmental agencies, educational institutions and all other entities to institute regular training programs, consistent with other human resource policies, to prevent sexual harassment. If sexual harassment, abuse and/or assault is reported to an official in an above-referenced agency, institution or entity, the Society recommends the following:

1. Respond quickly to the complaint.
2. Vigorously and impartially investigate the complaint.
3. Take timely appropriate action to resolve the complaint.

The Athena Society further recommends that the Florida Legislature review current state statutes and rules to ensure they adequately address sexual harassment and the associated penalties.

Violence Prevention

The Athena Society supports violence prevention programs in our community and actions to support:

1. Public and private development and coordination of programs to emphasize the primary prevention of violence,
2. The active role of governmental and social institutions in preventing violent behavior, and
3. The allocation of public funds in governmental programs to prevent violence.

Women In Government

Concerned that:

1. Women are under-represented in Hillsborough County's Legislative Delegation;
2. While women represent better than 50 percent of residents/voters, they do not occupy like percentages of representation in local, state, or national politics; and
3. Choice, education, day care, pay equity, and like issues stand a better chance of being addressed or supported by women in government, the Athena Society adopts a position of encouragement and support for qualified women candidates who support these issues.