



We Got A Seat at the 'Update' Table

May 25, 2015 By [Josh Robbins](#)

I got an invitation to The White House.

Depending your political affiliation or belonging, that invitation could mean much or not. I get it.

But, I'm not political really at all. So, I was pumped up.

As described by O&AN:

“It’s one of those cool moments where you ask, not expecting anything,” Robbins said. “I was asking in general because we aren’t included in the current plan and we should be. So it was a cool moment: you’ll never receive if you don’t ask. I asked and I was kinda shocked.”

The invitation arose directly from a comment Robbins made a week ago at a regional forum for the national AIDS strategy held in Nashville. He asked representatives of ONAP if independent HIV activists -- individuals like Robbins who are not directly affiliated with or employed by an HIV/AIDS service organization -- could participate in the development of the new plan.

So, honestly and humbly it had little to do with me at all, really. It was about independent activists and advocates finally getting a voice at the federal table.

I was inspired to speak up on behalf of my activists friends: Kevin Maloney, Maria HIV, and [A Marine and HIV](#). These are few of the people online that inspire me. And they just happen to making some pretty big waves online with their reach. They understand as well as any large organization what it means to have funding cut--they do amazing things with none.

Be sure to add your voice to the discussion here: <https://nhas.uservoice.com>

And my travel was sponsored by the amazing local organization I am a supporter of locally in Nashville- [Nashville Health Management Foundation](#). They paid for my flight and I couldn't have gone without them.