



So You Wanna Be
An Advocate...????

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; **Indeed it's the only thing that ever has**”

- Margaret Mead

Getting Started

Key Words

Advocate: One that pleads the cause of another.

(Source: Webster's Dictionary)

Key Words

Lobby: To conduct activities aimed at influencing public officials and especially members of a legislative body on legislation.

(Source: Webster's Dictionary)

Key Words

Bill: The form in which a proposal to create, change or abolish a law is introduced into the legislature.

(Source: Webster's Dictionary)

Key Words

Policy: A high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body.

(Source: Webster's Dictionary)

10 Rules of Legislative Advocacy

1. Play Nice in the Sandbox

Know the difference between the terms
“advocate” and “adversary”

Be the former

Play Nice...

- **Advocate:** One that pleads the cause of another
- **Adversary:** One that contends with, opposes or resists; enemy

2. Know the Law!

- 501(c)(3) Lobbying---influencing the outcome of legislation, is lawful. Political activity “influencing the outcome of an election” is not
- Check the laws in your state on lobbyist registration and follow them
- Educate and inform

3. Know What you Want to Accomplish with your Actions

- Identify your outcome
- Insure that the steps you are committed to taking will lead you from A to Z
- Insure that your action does what it is intended to do

4. Don't Reinvent the Wheel

- If you are drafting legislation, research your idea and speak with those who have paved the way
- Collect existing resources to help you in your effort

5. Don't be a Loner

- Build coalitions
- Collaborate with similar organizations
- Build grassroots support
- Enlist help from legislative staff
- Talk to other advocates and lobbyists
- Get support/feedback from relevant state agencies

6. Know the Process

- Know how a bill becomes a law in your state
- Understand that process and practices vary from state to state and between state and federal governments
- Take the time to get to know informal practices
- Understand what you do and do not need legislation to change in your state

7. Make it a Year-long Process

- Legislative advocacy does not begin with the legislative session
- Start as early as possible

8. Identify the Players

- Know your majority party
- Become familiar with Committee Chairs
- Identify and meet Legislative staff
- Learn your State Departments/Agencies, in particular your designated state agency
- Keep an eye on the Executive

9. Always Tell the Truth!

- Commit to getting answers
- Don't overstate your influence

10. Be Grateful!

- Be kind and courteous in all you do
- Say thanks when you are through regardless of outcome