



Advocacy 101

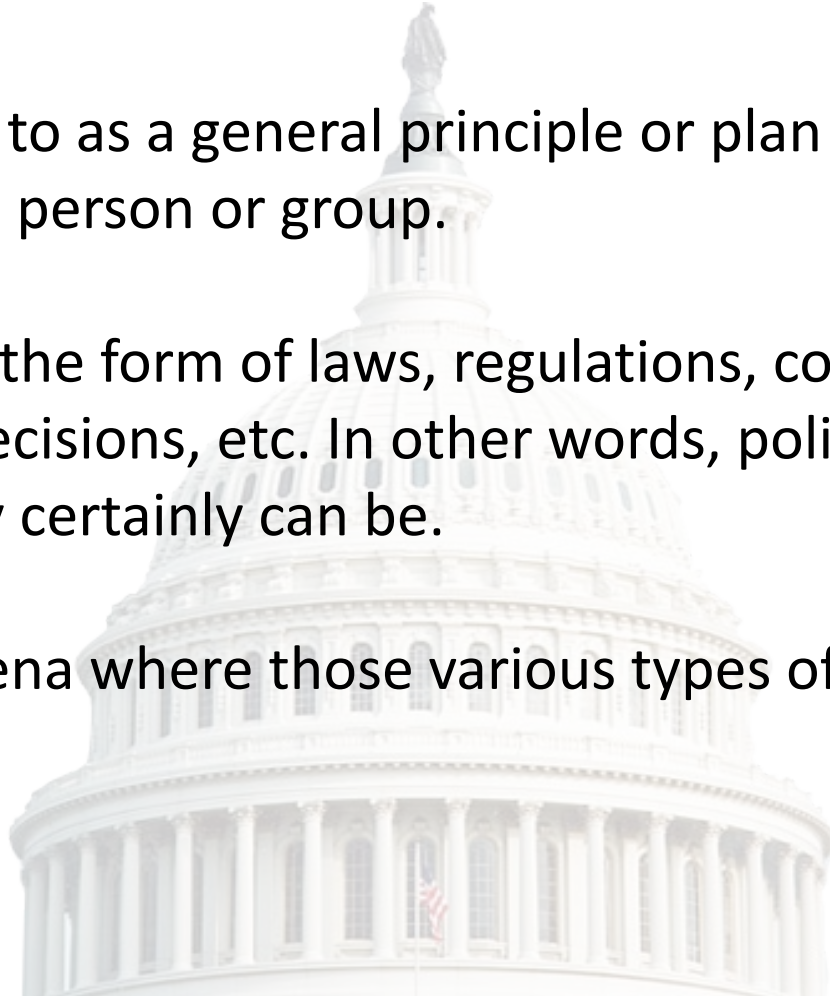
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What is Policy?

Policy is referred to as a general principle or plan that guides the action taken by a person or group.

Policies can take the form of laws, regulations, company policies, administrative decisions, etc. In other words, policies don't have to be laws, but they certainly can be.

The advocacy arena where those various types of policies are made is very diverse.



Policy and Why It Matters?

When we talk about “public policy,” we’re normally talking about laws, statute, administrative rules, and administrative code.

In other words, we’re talking about the legal and regulatory ground on which we all work, play, and live.

Various governmental entities – city, county, state, and federal – are constantly working to improve that ground by writing new laws, drafting new code, etc., with the goal of doing the most good for the most people.

Public Policy and Why it Matters? Cont.

Good policy doesn't happen on its own: it requires the input and advocacy of all relevant stakeholders.

That's especially true when it comes to issues that most lawmakers and regulators might not be experts on (and that covers a lot of ground).

So, we can't just assume that government has all the expertise it needs to craft good public policy on a given issue, but we can help lend it that expertise, and we can help make sure that they listen.

The 3 P's of Public Policy

Policy – any legislative or regulatory proposal has to not only be a good idea, i.e., beneficial to the majority of a district/state/nation, it also has to work in the real world.

Price – even if a proposal is a proven or consensus good and workable idea, it likely won't see the light of day if it's unaffordable.

Politics – even if a proposal is taken from a strategic plan and is budget-neutral or affordable, it still needs to pass, which means that the people, businesses, and organizations supporting it have to out-hustle those opposing it.

What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is an effort by a person or group to influence the decisions of persons or entities that have the power to do what you want done. It is speaking on behalf of people and the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal.



Advocacy is How

YOU have the power to influence legislation and shape public policy initiatives that could impact the lives of all in your community, city, state, country.



Advocacy Arena

- US Congress
- State Legislatures
- City Councils
- School Boards
- Corporations
- Universities
- Neighborhoods



Accomplishing Policy Change

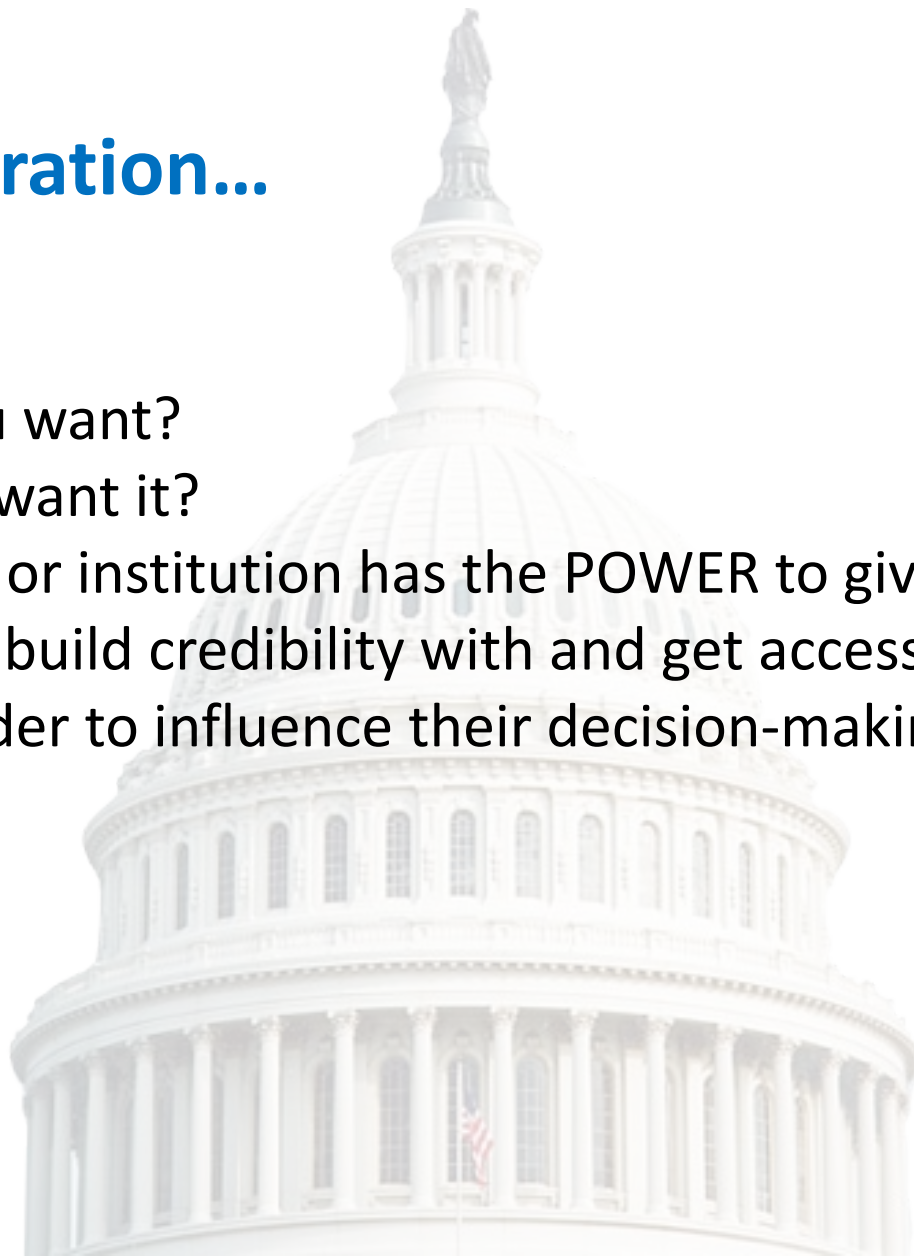


We are able to accomplish these policy changes through:

- ✓ Direct Lobbying
- ✓ Media Advocacy
- ✓ Grassroots Advocacy
- ✓ Grasstops Advocacy

For Consideration...

- WHAT do you want?
- WHY do you want it?
- What person or institution has the POWER to give it to you?
- How will you build credibility with and get access to those POWER brokers in order to influence their decision-making?



Learn More about Key Decision Makers



Direct Lobbying

Having a voice at the capitol

- ✓ Provide information
- ✓ Negotiate with stakeholders
- ✓ Count votes

Lobbying is vital in moving our policy priorities forward and accomplishing your goals.

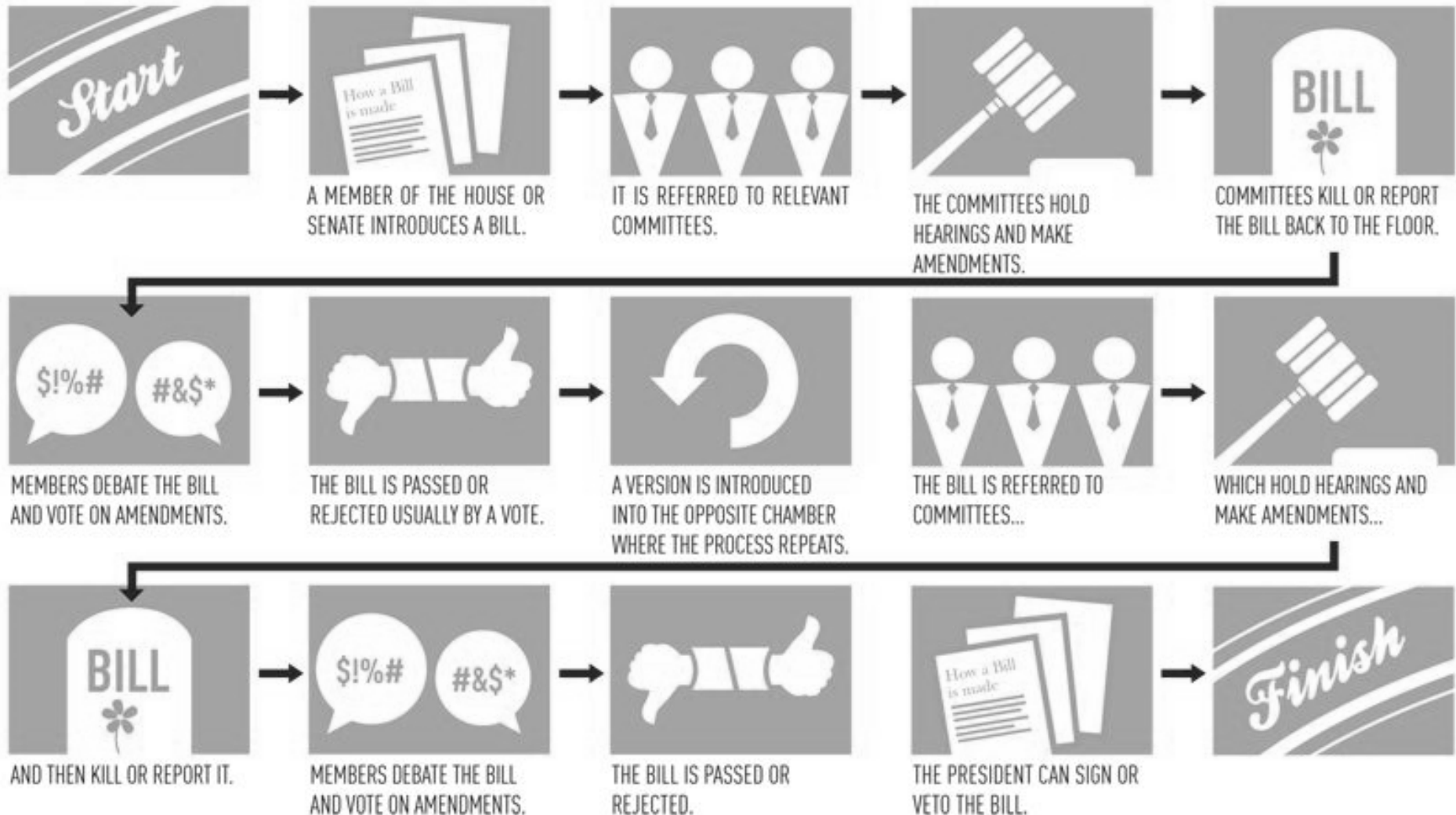


CAUTION!

As a 501©3 Non-profit organization it is extremely important for us to remain non-partisan and follow specific IRS rules regarding advocacy activity and lobbying



How a bill becomes a law?



Indiana General Assembly
[Indiana General Assembly, 2022 Session](#)



Media Advocacy

Influence decision-makers to think (and act) differently about an issue that matters to you through the media outlets that matter to them.

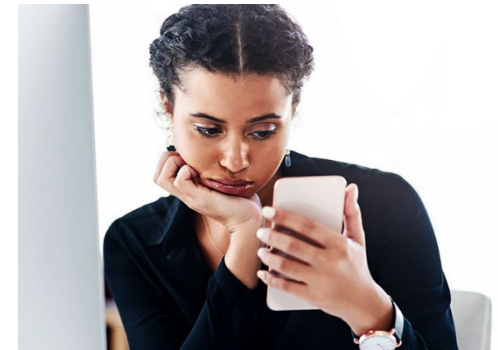


Media Advocacy

Education and Awareness



- ✓ Promotion of our issues
- ✓ Sharing stories
- ✓ Influencing public opinion



Media advocacy can play a huge role in building support for any given priority among the public and policymakers.

Use Social Media



Engaging on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and others have changed the ways people communicate.

YouTube and other video-sharing websites have also become mainstream in spreading information, gaining support through numerous views of video clips and creating the occasional viral sensation. Most social networking sites share video as well, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok.

Major news sites also have video imbedded, creating a multi-faceted approach to media. Personal video messages can be another effective way to communicate with lawmakers at all levels. Consider sharing a video message and sending a link to your lawmakers to view. Microblogging is a short form of communication and on many services are limited to no more than 150 characters. The most popular microblogging tool is Twitter.

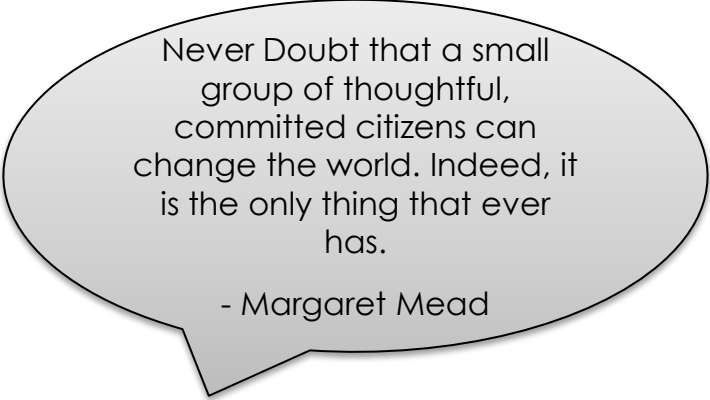
Tips to Write Your Letter to the Editor:

- ✓ You have an important story to tell! Lawmakers read their local newspapers and can be influenced by stories from their constituents.
- ✓ Link your letter to a published story. You can respond to any article that you feel relates to your cause as a hook to get the editor's attention.
- ✓ Keep it short and concise, up to 250 words maximum.
- ✓ Include your contact information. Often, publications will call to verify your identity and confirm that you submitted the LTE.
- ✓ Use a catchy title. Your title should offer a preview of what your letter is about in a way that attracts the attention of your audience.
- ✓ Talk about the issue from your perspective. Your LTE should seek to answer these two questions: Why is this issue important to you? Why is it important to people in your community?

Grassroots Advocacy

Measuring Influence Through Actions

- ✓ Recruit
- ✓ Inform
- ✓ Activate



Never Doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

- Margaret Mead

Online Actions: Taking action on alerts, sending emails to your elected officials.

Offline Actions: (Face to Face meetings with elected officials, phone calls, advocacy trainings, media advocacy, testimony, grassroots recruitment....)

Grassroots Advocacy

What makes an advocate?

- ✓ Objectivity
- ✓ Independence
- ✓ Sensitivity and Understanding
- ✓ Persistence and Patience
- ✓ Knowledge and Judgment
- ✓ Assertiveness
- ✓ Ethics and Respect for Others



3 Reasons To Know Your Lawmakers

- ✓ Help your lawmaker get to know you and your community.
- ✓ Establish yourself as a credible source for information and connections in the community.
- ✓ Share vital stories of community members you want them to remember



How to Contact Your Lawmaker

- ✓ Letters – handwritten or emails
- ✓ Social Media - contact lawmakers via their sites
- ✓ Telephone Calls – official office or home if listed
- ✓ Petition Cards – collect cards from supporters in the **lawmaker's district**
- ✓ Action Alerts – online advocacy systems
- ✓ Newsletters – send organization or neighborhood newsletters to lawmakers
- ✓ Third House Meetings – organized by the Chamber, Rotary, League of Women's voters, etc., usually held in the evening or weekend during session
- ✓ In-district meetings – these are held in district by lawmakers

Sharing Your Story



Your story can have a significant impact! It helps bring an issue to life for your listener. By sharing your story, you can:

- ✓ Put a face on facts and figures.
- ✓ Connect lawmakers to constituents and what's happening in their district.
- ✓ Provide the human-interest side of an issue.
- ✓ Help gain media coverage of an issue.
- ✓ Inspire new advocates to join the effort.

**Key stakeholders have the power,
by virtue of who they are or what they do,
to effect change.**

Writing an Email to Stakeholders/Legislators



- ✓ Some organizations have setup action alerts to make it simple for you to send an email to decision-makers who set policy and make laws.
- ✓ When you receive an action alert, personalize the message with one or two sentences and send it.
- ✓ If you have a personal story about tied to the issue, share it in your email.
- ✓ When legislators receive hundreds of personalized messages about a certain issue, they're more likely to notice and take action.

Writing a Letter to Stakeholders/Legislators



- ✓ Be sure to let the decision-maker know where you live (city, state) and why you feel so strongly about the issue.
- ✓ Encourage the decision-maker to respond and let you know their position on the issue.
- ✓ It's best to send letters to members of Congress to the local district office rather than to Washington, D.C., where mail is processed for safety and delivery can be delayed.
- ✓ Keep your organization partners up to date on how your communication efforts are going.

Personal Telephone Calls



- ✓ There may be other times when you want to call your lawmaker directly. Regardless, here are general tips when calling:
 - Make sure to identify yourself, mention where you live, and share that you are calling as a constituent or for an organization.
 - Be brief in stating the purpose of your call, follow the talking points provided.
 - If the elected official isn't available, make sure you leave a message.
 - Sample outline for talking points:
 - Hi, my name is [first and last name].
 - I live at [home street address].
 - I'm calling [lawmaker's title and name] about x-issue.
 - Add 1-2 sentences about why this is important to you and/or the community.
 - I hope to count on their support.

Grasstops Advocacy

Your Guide to Building a Successful Grasstops Advocacy Strategy

Learn how to build a grasstops strategy and read best practices you can include in your approach.

Access Now

- When your issue needs that personalized touch with a lawmaker, one of your members' relationships could be a very important piece in the puzzle.
- Grasstops advocacy means mobilizing anyone within your supporter base who has a relationship with or can bring extra influence on the people that can change policy, public perception, or anything else for you.
- Grasstops advocates could include your organization's leadership, board members, well-connected volunteers or donors, etc. Some of your more intense grassroots advocates tend to become grasstops as they build networks and get more involved with your issues.

Grasstops Advocacy

Some common actions you can achieve with grasstops advocacy are leveraging:

- ✓ In-person meetings and **fly-ins**
- ✓ Site visits
- ✓ Targeting specific lawmakers, staffers & committees
- ✓ Sharing personal stories



Thank you!!

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