Advocacy 101

How to break through and make an impact
Who We Are

Ben Van Pelt
American Heart Association

Nicole Hudzinski
American Heart Association

Robb Friedlander
Feeding America
What is Advocacy?

**Advocacy** is defined as an activity by an individual or group which aims to influence decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions.

**Advocacy** uses your voice to bring attention to an issue.

**Advocacy** in this presentation will focus on changes to “big-P” public policy.

**Advocacy Activities** can take many forms, and it depends on the individual to determine which are the best fit for you.
TOGETHER WE CAN SOLVE HUNGER
“WE IN AMERICA DO NOT HAVE GOVERNMENT BY THE MAJORITY. WE HAVE GOVERNMENT BY THE MAJORITY WHO PARTICIPATE.”

-THOMAS JEFFERSON
HUNGER IN AMERICA

What Is Food Insecurity?
The USDA defines food insecurity as a lack of access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.

42.2 million Americans struggle with hunger

13.1 million children

5.7 million seniors

more than 1 in 8
Hunger Knows No Geographic, Political or Regional Boundary
We KNOW The Non-Profit Sector CAN’T Do it Alone!
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The federal nutrition programs play a critical role in improving food security, health and well-being of participants.

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program
- Afterschool and Summer Meals
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)
- Congregate Meals/Community Dining
- Home-Delivered Meals
- Other programs (e.g. Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program)
BUT

Do Our Voices Make A Difference?
It’s Polling Time
Congress doesn’t listen to my food bank, food pantry or organization. We/they don’t donate millions of dollars, we don’t have SUPER PAC’s and hired lobbyists.

So our voice doesn’t matter.
Constituents are listened to MUCH more than lobbyists

“If your Member/Senator has not already arrived at a firm decision on an issue, how much influence might the following advocacy strategies directed to the Washington office have on his/her decision?”

(source: “Communicating With Congress,” Congressional Management Foundation, 2005)
How can you be an effective advocate?

A lot of ways to advocate:
• Meetings (focus of this presentation)
• Phone Calls
• Letters/Emails
• Town Halls
• Petitions
• Letters to the Editor/Media Interviews
• SOCIAL MEDIA!

All of these have a common theme of building and maintaining a good relationship with your elected officials.
Phone Calls
Hi Ben,

Great news to report! We’ve learned that the dispatcher-assisted CPR bill (AB 654/SB 548) has been scheduled for a vote in the Senate next week on March 25th, which means now’s the time to send one last message to your lawmaker about this legislation.

In Wisconsin, over 6,000 people suffer cardiac arrest outside of a hospital each year. Sadly, bystander CPR is only administered in about 19% of those cases. When a bystander calls 911, we want to make sure that the dispatcher will be able to relay the CPR instructions the caller needs to hear so they can help save a life. This legislation will help empower bystanders to perform CPR and save lives in communities across the state.

Click this link to send a message to your State Senator today. Ask them to support this legislation when it’s up for a vote on March 25th!

Keep watching your emails for more messages from me, I’ll be sure to let you know what happens next week!

Jason
Town Hall Meetings
Petitions
Letter: Don't repeal ACA without replacement

Kay Mittelstadt Lock  
Published 9:11 a.m. CT Feb. 23, 2017

My son is a college student who has access to his parents' health insurance because of the Affordable Care Act. He also can't be excluded from coverage because he's had cancer or medical bills in the past.

Now there is talk about repealing and replacing the health care law. I know the ACA isn't perfect, but it has been a lifesaver for us and the more than 20 million Americans who have enrolled in coverage. I fully support improving the law -- but I think it would be the absolutely wrong decision to repeal the law without any immediate plans for a replacement.

I am asking Speaker Paul Ryan, Rep. Glenn Grothman and Senators Ron Johnson and Tammy Baldwin to remember families like ours when they consider a vote to repeal the health care law with no replacement. Please don't take away my peace of mind if you have nothing to put in its place.

Kay Mittelstadt Lock  
Fond du Lac
SOCIAL MEDIA!
How to Talk with Lawmakers

The Do’s and Don’t’s of Meeting with Elected Officials

April 2018
Typical Lawmaker Meeting in their Capitol Office vs. In District

- 15-20 minute meeting
- Lawmakers often running late
- Meeting with Legislative Aide is possibility
- Different styles

- Can be longer meetings
- Lawmakers much more often on time
- More relaxed setting
- Different styles
Meeting Flow

• Introductions
• Talk about the issue: (What are you there advocating for? This should be focused.)
• Share personal story
• Make the “ask”
• Offer thanks
• Group photo
Introductions

• Don’t rush or underestimate importance of introductions
• Name
• “Constituent”
• Residence
A Quick Thing To Keep In Mind

MOC’s are just middle children wanting to be loved.

- Effective advocacy is all about relationship building. Always continue to improve your relationship with your MOC. Express disappointment but with understanding and always strive to deepen your relationship.

Happy Middle Child's Day! Oh, you didn't notice that it was Middle Child's Day? Don't worry, no one ever does.
Talk about “The Issue”

• Keep it simple
• Three key points
  – What is a succinct way of explaining the issue.
• What does your legislator care about? What moves them?
Share Personal Story

- Personal stories make it real
- No personal story to share?

Then, find someone else’s to share? A volunteer’s? A colleagues?
5 Quick Things To Keep In Mind

Frame The Impact That Changes Would Have On Your Community

• Communicate with your elected officials the impact that their decisions will make in your community. Bring statistics and share stories to prove the negative consequences cutting programs will have and the impact that programs like SNAP have on families and people you serve.
Make the Ask

• Will you support “THE ISSUE?”
Thank You & Group Photo

• No matter what, thank your lawmakers and/or their staff
• Take a “group” photo
• Share your pics on social media; “if it is not on Facebook, it didn’t happen.”
Other Things to Know

- ALWAYS have a hand-out/leave-behind.
- It’s okay to look at notes or reference the handouts
- It’s okay to say “I don’t know”
Large Group Meetings

• Prep ahead of time and stay organized
• Choose 2-3 people to talk
• Discuss who has a personal story to share
• Decide who will make the ask
• Assign someone to take notes
Lawmaker Responses

- Yes, of course I’ll support
- Not sure, need to think about it
- No way, can’t support
Potential Questions

• There is always the potential for lawmakers to ask questions about your policy.
• REMEMBER, it is ok to say that you do not know.
• Make the offer to follow up with information.
A Quick Thing To Keep In Mind

Be Your Own Expert, Not The Expert You Play On TV

• Be the experts YOU are, not one played on TV. Your members of Congress are not looking at you for your policy/political advice, they are looking at you for stories and impact.
Do’s and Don’ts

**Do:**
- Be on time
- Turn your phone off
- Stay on message
- Pay attention to body language
- Be polite and thank them for their time

**Don’t**
- Lose track of time
- Disparage a meeting with staff
- Lobby on other issues
- Get defensive
- Threaten not to vote for them
A Quick Thing To Keep In Mind

Your District Staff Are Your Biggest Champions

• Don’t ignore them because they are not in DC. Data from the Congressional Management Foundation shows that relationship building with your in-district staff can prove more valuable for moving your issues forward.
Report Back Forms/Note Taking

• Important to record how the meeting went and any reactions or questions.
• Whether this is a formal report back form or just in the notes taken at the meeting
• Also serves as a reminder to send a THANK YOU NOTE
A **Very Important** Thing To Keep In Mind

You are MOST LIKELY a C3

- We must speak in non-partisan and educational language. If you have any questions reach out to Feeding Wisconsin Staff or e-mail [Policy@feedingamerica.org](mailto:Policy@feedingamerica.org)
Tools at your disposal

- Legislative Website (worksheet exercise)
- Our organizations (You’re The Cure Network)
Questions
Who Are We Again?

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