Advocacy 101: Effectively Promoting Your Cause

Agenda

I. Overview of the Typical Legislative Process

II. Dynamics of the 113th Congress

III. Twelve Steps for Successful Legislative Advocacy

IV. Advocacy Case Study

Section I
Overview of the Typical Legislative Process

The Chambers of Congress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>House</th>
<th>Senate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members chosen from local districts</td>
<td>Members chosen from an entire state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-year term</td>
<td>Six-year term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Originally elected by voters</td>
<td>Originally (until 1913) elected by state legislators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not impeachable (indeed) federal officials</td>
<td>May impeach federal officials of impeachable offense</td>
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<tr>
<td>Larger (435 voting members)</td>
<td>Smaller (100 members)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More formal rules</td>
<td>Fewer rules and restrictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate limited</td>
<td>Debate extended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less prestige and less individual notice</td>
<td>More prestige and more media attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Originates bills for raising revenues</td>
<td>Has power to advise the president on, and to consent to, presidential appointments and treaties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local or area leadership</td>
<td>National leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More partisan</td>
<td>Less party loyalty</td>
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</table>

*Some of these differences, such as the term of office, are provided for in the Constitution. Others, such as debate rules, are not.

Powers of the U.S. Congress

Spend, Regulate Commerce
Taxation
Lawmaking
Create Courts
Declare War

"necessary and proper" to carrying out the enumerated powers

The Legislative Process in Congress

Heritage Preservation: Caring for Yesterday's Treasures--Today
**Lawmaking by the U.S. Congress**

- Only a member of the House or Senate may introduce a bill but anyone can write a bill.
- Over 9,000 bills are proposed and fewer than 5 to 10% are enacted.
- Most bills originate in the executive branch.
- A bill must survive three stages to become a law: committees, the floor, and the conference committee. A bill can die at any stage.

**Committees of the U.S. Congress**

Thousands of bills are introduced in every session of Congress. The committee system ("little legislatures") is a way to provide for specialization, or a division of legislative labor. Chairpersons wield much power over the committee’s agenda.

- Standing committees: (most important) permanent bodies that are established by the rules of each chamber of Congress and continue from session to session.
- Select committees: Created for a limited time for a specific purpose. They disband after they report.
- Joint committees: Formed by the concurrent action of both chambers of Congress and consists of members of both chambers. May be permanent or temporary.
- Conference committees: Formed for the purpose of achieving agreement on the exact wording of a bill when the two chambers pass legislative proposals in different forms ("third house of Congress"). They have much power over changes in the bill.

**Decision-making by Members of Congress**

- It is rare for a legislator to disregard strong wishes of constituents, particularly on hot button issues or those contentious issues that get a lot of media attention.
- Deciding how the voters feel is not possible.
- The perceptions of the representative are important since he/she cannot really know how all the constituents feel about an issue.
- If constituents have little knowledge or interest in an issue, the legislator often makes an autonomous decision.

**Congressional Gridlock: Legislation Enacted As a Percentage of Legislation Introduced 80th - 112th Congresses**

- The graph shows the percentage of legislation enacted as a percentage of legislation introduced over the 80th to 112th Congresses.
- Each Congress is represented in the graph, showing the trend of legislation enacted.

**Section II**

Dynamics of the 113th Congress
Outreach Activities for Collections Care:
Webinar 1

Section III

Twelve Steps for Successful Legislative Advocacy

Advocating to Elected Legislators

1. Feel good about what you are doing ... outreach visits to key decision-makers are one of the backbones of our democratic process.

2. Be on time. Identify yourself and the organization you represent. If you are visiting an elected official (and live in the legislator’s district), say so.

3. Be friendly and respectful. Try to create a personal bond right from the start.

4. Once greetings are completed, explain why you are there. Present a clear message and get your point across in the fewest words possible.
5. Ask your decision-maker to do something specific. Say exactly what you want the policy-maker to do, using your own words or the language prepared by your advocacy organization. If your issue involves legislation, cite the specific bill’s name or number.

6. Don’t overstate your case … use hard facts to support your viewpoint. Leave supporting documentation whenever possible.

7. Don’t be afraid to express an informed opinion about an issue, even if you’re not an expert. Also, don’t be afraid to explain your technical credentials if you are, in fact, an expert on a particular issue.

8. Be prepared for questions, even challenges. If a question throws you off balance because you don’t know the answer, don’t be afraid to say “I don’t know.” Better to commit to research the matter and report back, than to give an incorrect response. Maintaining your credibility is essential!!

9. Be a good listener. Give the decision-maker or staff member a chance to express his or her point of view. Also, listen for an actual commitment of support, not something that may sound like one, but really isn’t.

10. Be gracious … remember to say thank you. Give special recognition to individuals who are known to be on your side. Ask them for advice and help in reaching out to other decision-makers and suggestions for ways to communicate issues to their colleagues.
Advocating to Elected Legislators

11. Get to know staff members of the decision-maker — they often have great influence and can be extremely helpful as follow-up contacts.

12. Follow up your visit with a thank you note or letter. Restate your case briefly and provide information you may have promised during your meeting.

Influencing Elected Officials

1. Decision-makers are influenced by personal contact and communication.

2. There are many different ways to influence a decision-maker to act on behalf of a preservation-related issue.

3. When choosing how you want to contact elected officials, keep in mind that the more personal you can make your communication, the better.

Influencing Elected Officials

**THE CONTACT PYRAMID**

When choosing how you will contact your decision-maker consider:

- The degree to which the activity is personal.
- The number of people you have to engage in the activity.

Calling Elected Officials

1. Plan: Before you make the call, plan what you are going to say. Your phone call will be very brief, so keep your message simple and to the point.

2. Message: Be sure to tell your story succinctly, why you care about historic preservation, and why you need their support. Think about the key point and how your story underscores your point of view.

3. Call: Make the call! Tell the decision-maker that you are a preservation supporter and a constituent of their legislative district and/or community.

4. Staff or Message: If you are calling a decision-maker, you may not be able to reach them directly. Be prepared to talk to staff or leave a succinct message instead.

Writing to Elected Officials

1. State that you are a preservation supporter and a constituent: This matters because leaders are most interested in the opinions of people who live in their area.

2. Personalize your letter: Research shows that personal letters have the most impact on decision-makers. If you are basing your letter on a form letter, rewrite it and consider using your personal stationery. This also gives you the chance to include your story, which is what will have the most impact.

3. Local, local, local: Make a strong connection between preservation and what you and the decision-maker see in your home community.

4. Show restraint: Keep your letter brief—1 to 1 ½ pages at most.

E-Mailing Elected Officials

1. In the subject line of the message, state that you are a preservation supporter and member of their community: This strategy will increase the likelihood that your message is read. (e.g., Subject: Message from a constituent and supporter of historic preservation.)

2. If the e-mail is mass-produced, modify it: It doesn’t take much time to insert your personal story and perspective, and it makes a big difference in making your e-mail credible rather than “canned.”

3. Follow up: Because e-mail is a more casual and often a mass-produced mode of communication, be sure that you are using other methods to persuade decision-makers. Follow your e-mail with a phone call, personal letter, or visit.
Section IV

Advocacy Case Study

1. Identify a project or policy change that can be achieved through successful legislative advocacy.

2. Research and collect pertinent data for how your project or policy change will positively impact the general public.

3. Enlist a legislative champion(s) who will share in the excitement for your campaign’s ultimate objective.

Advocacy Case Study

4. Identify the key decision-makers who need to view your project or policy change favorably; develop a coordinated plan for direct advocacy to these individuals.

5. Develop a strategy for building public support for your project or policy change (e.g., marketing tools, outreach strategy, publicity and media, etc.)

Advocacy Case Study

6. Prepare for and effectively deliver any direct written or oral testimony that can be used to support your cause.

7. Closely monitor the mechanics of the legislative process, and how this process might impact the prospects for your project or policy change.

Storyville at Rosedale

Dollars for Storyville!!!
Final Thoughts
1. Remember ... you don’t need to be an expert in all of the technicalities of your bill(s) or advocacy issue(s).
2. You only need to be an expert in your story—how the problem affects you and your community and how the solution can bring about meaningful and direct change.
3. Communicating with a decision-maker is not much different from the communication you use every day.
4. Follow-up and repeated contact makes a difference. Send your decision-maker supporting information or work with your chapter to get them what they need.

Useful Resources
National Trust for Historic Preservation Advocacy Center
http://www.preservationnation.org/take-action/advocacy-center/

National Alliance of Preservation Commissions – Advocacy Review
http://napc.uga.edu/advocacy/

Historic Charleston (SC) – Preservation Advocacy

American Library Association – Advocacy, Legislation & Issues
http://www.ala.org/advocacy/

American Library Association – Advocating in a Tough Economy Toolkit
http://www.ala.org/advocacy/advleg/advocacyuniversity/toolkit

Questions????