

Working with Legislators:

What can I do and how do I do it?

Mike Glasgow, RD,CD

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

One Voice

Individuals and organizations are more effective if they speak with one unified voice. One message – the same message.

Why does it matter?

Federal and state rules and regulations profoundly affect the services we can provide for our clients.

– Examples: Nutrition standards, background checks, target populations, etc.

- ◆ Federal and state funding
- ◆ Older Americans Act
- ◆ Farm Bill
- ◆ Tax deductions on charitable contributions

Who's Who – Federal

Three branches of government:

- ◆ Legislative (Congress)– makes the laws
 - Senate: 2 from each state, 6-year terms
 - House: currently set to 435 (population-driven), 2-year terms
- ◆ Executive – enforces the laws of the US
 - President, VP, White House
- ◆ Judicial – interprets the laws
 - Supreme Court, et al.

www.house.gov

The screenshot shows the homepage of the United States House of Representatives website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Visitors, Educators and Students, Media, Doing Business with the House, and Employment. A search bar is located on the right. Below the navigation bar is a dark banner with the House of Representatives logo and a "FIND YOUR REPRESENTATIVE" section with a zip code input field and a "GO" button. A white arrow points to the "FIND YOUR REPRESENTATIVE" text. Below the banner is a horizontal menu with links for REPRESENTATIVES, LEADERSHIP, COMMITTEES, LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY, and THE HOUSE EXPLAINED. The main content area features a large photo of a group of people, with a caption that reads "Congress Honors Suu Kyi" and "Congressional Gold Medal presented to human rights champion Aung San Suu Kyi." Below the photo are four buttons: "Find Your Representative", "Watch HouseLive", "Congress Honors Suu Kyi", and "2012 Capitol Christmas Tree". To the right of the photo is a "Legislative Activity" section with tabs for "Schedule", "Floor Proceedings", "Votes", and "Bills & Reports". Below these tabs, it says "Upcoming Events" and "Watch Most Recent House Floor Activity". A message states "There are no events scheduled." and "Please visit the Legislative Activity page to view previous events." A white box with a black border is overlaid on the bottom right of the screenshot, containing the text: "To locate your programs' U.S Representative(s), type the zip code(s) for your program's service area."

www.senate.gov



The screenshot shows the homepage of the United States Senate website. At the top, there is a search bar with a dropdown menu labeled 'Find Your Senators' and 'Find Your Senators'. A white arrow points to this dropdown menu with the word 'Here'. Below the search bar, there is a navigation menu with links for SENATORS, COMMITTEES, LEGISLATION & RECORDS, ART & HISTORY, VISITORS, and REFERENCE. The main content area features a large article titled 'When a New Congress Begins' with a sub-headline 'On January 3, 2013, the Senate convenes its first session of the 113th Congress. The proceedings of this first day follow a well established routine. Having presented their credentials to the Senate, newly elected and reelected senators are sworn in by the vice president. The Senate is divided into three classes for election purposes, and every two years one-third of the Senate is elected or reelected. For this reason, only a third of the senators will take the oath on January 3.' Below the article is a photo of the Senate chamber. To the right of the article, there is a sidebar with links for '2013 SESSION SCHEDULE', 'SCHEDULED HEARINGS', 'ACTIVE LEGISLATION', 'NOTES', and 'Floor Schedule'. A callout box on the right side of the page contains the text: 'To locate your programs' U.S Senators, click your state in the dropdown menu.'

Who's Who – State *Example: Wisconsin*

- ◆ Governor
 - Chief Executive of the state
 - Unlimited 4-year terms – elected by the masses in general election
 - Considerable control over state budget
 - Power of appointment of many officials
 - Commander-in-Chief of state National Guard when not under federal control

Who's Who – State *Example: Wisconsin*

- ◆ State Senate
 - 33 in state of Wisconsin.
 - May serve unlimited 4-year terms
 - Term limits vary from state to state.

- ◆ State House of Representatives or State Assembly
 - 99 members in Wisconsin.
 - May serve unlimited 2-year terms.
 - Term limits vary (e.g. MI = 3, 2-yr terms)

<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/>

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Wisconsin State Legislature website. The browser address bar displays <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/>. The page title is "WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE" and the subtitle is "State of Wisconsin Home Page". The navigation menu includes "Home", "Senate", "Assembly", "Legislation", "Joint Legislative Committees", "Legislative Service Agencies", "Wisconsin Law", "Wisconsin Blue Book", "2010 Redistricting Information", and "Other Information". A search bar is located at the top left. The main content area features a large image of the Wisconsin State Capitol building. To the right of the image, there is a "Legislative Activity" section with links to "2011-2012 Session Calendar", "Committee Schedule", "Senate Session", "Assembly Session", "Spotlight", "Session Statistics - updated 7/13/12", "Audio/Video Coverage", "Budget Bill", and "Budget Bill (partially vetoed)". Below the image, there are sections for "DOCUMENTS", "WHO REPRESENTS ME?", "Legislative Districts", and "NOTIFICATION SERVICE".

<http://Legislature.Mi.gov>

The screenshot shows the Michigan Legislative Website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Register, Login, News, and Help. Below this is a header section with the Michigan State Capitol dome and the text 'MICHIGAN LEGISLATIVE WEBSITE'. A date stamp indicates 'Michigan Compiled Laws Complete Through PA 386 of 2012' and 'House: Adjourned until Wednesday, January 09, 2013 12:00:00 PM'. The main content area includes a 'Welcome!' message, a 'Recent Activity' section listing 'SB 1272 of 2012 (PA 0493 of 2012) Employment security; contribution rate; distribution of cont... ASSIGNED PA 0493'12 WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT', and several search options: 'Legislative Bill Search', 'Bill Number (current session)', 'Bill Key Word Search (current session)', 'Michigan Compiled Laws Search', and 'MCL Key Word Search'. A sidebar on the left contains a 'Legislature' menu with various sub-links like Bills, Appropriation Bills/Passed, and Committees. At the bottom, there are 'Related Sites' for Michigan House and Michigan Senate.

Federal and State Legislation

- ◆ Older Americans Act
 - Each state gets \$XX based on population. States determine how to distribute within their state
- ◆ Farm Bill Senior Farmers' Market Voucher Program
 - States get \$XX. State decides how to distribute funds. Not all states get it, and all are not distributed state-wide.

State Legislation

Example: Wisconsin

- ◆ Senior Nutrition Program
 - Older Americans Act Nutrition Program
 - State of Wisconsin provides about \$13M for OAA aging programs from the state's General Purpose Revenue fund
 - Census shifts have left some counties with fewer low-income seniors leading to a decrease in funding
 - Need to advocate for additional funding for those counties

Statute vs. Regulation

- ◆ Legislature enacts statutes.
- ◆ Statute = law
- ◆ Regulation outlines how the law will be enacted.
 - Federal law → state statute → legislative language in State Administrative Code
- ◆ Regulation = rules that outline how the law will be enacted and enforced (the details)

Statute vs. Regulation

- ◆ Statutory Code
 - **State law** passed by the state legislature and signed by the governor

- ◆ Administrative Code
 - **State regulations** written by the appropriate department
 - Same authority and enforcement as statute



Politics should be the part
time job of every citizen

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Advocacy vs. Lobbying

◆ Examples of **Advocacy**:

- Telling your legislator how a federal grant your organization received has helped your customers / clientele.
- Educating a legislator about the effects of a policy on your constituency.
- Inviting a legislator to visit your organization so that he/she may see firsthand how federal funding or a policy affects day-to-day operations and the difference it makes.

<http://www.ncoa.org/public-policy-action/advocacy-toolkit/>

Advocacy vs. Lobbying

◆ Examples of **Lobbying**:

- Asking your legislator to vote for or against, or amend introduced legislation.
- Emailing a “call to action” to your members urging them to contact their member of Congress in support of action on introduced legislation or pending regulations.
- Preparing materials or organizing events in support of lobbying activities.

<http://www.ncoa.org/public-policy-action/advocacy-toolkit/>

Lobbyist

◆ Lobbyist: Any individual

- (1) who is either employed or retained by a client for financial or other compensation
- (2) whose services include more than one lobbying contact; and
- (3) whose lobbying activities constitute 20 percent or more of his or her services' time on behalf of that client during any three-month period.

– Office of the Clerk, US House of Representatives

Individual Lobbying

It is your democratic right, protected by the First Amendment, to voice your personal opinions on legislation and lobby your government officials. Your voice is important.

Non-profits and Lobbying

- ◆ Non-profits are allowed to engage in lobbying activities, provided they do not engage in excessive lobbying or spend a certain percentage of their budget on lobbying efforts.
- ◆ Non-profits may lobby but need to follow their state's rules for lobbying

Aging Advocacy Resources

- NCOA Advocacy Toolkit
<http://www.ncoa.org/public-policy-action/advocacy-toolkit>
- NCOA Nutrition Advocacy Toolkit
<http://www.ncoa.org/public-policy-action/advocacy-toolkit/advocacy-toolkit-nutrition.html>

SO

WHAT?!?



What do we need to do?

- ◆ Legislators need to know who we are!
 - What / who are we?
 - What do we do to keep their constituents healthy?
 - How do we relate to them and their committee or agency?
 - How can we be resources for them?

What do we need to do?

Law makers need to know what we can do for them to make their jobs easier.

How can we help them help their constituents?

What can I do?

- ◆ Legislators need and expect their constituents to contact them about issues they are passionate about.
- ◆ Be concise, but cover all the points you wish to make. Most meetings last less than 30 minutes, so budget your time wisely and leave time for discussion.

It is not enough to be
compassionate.
You must act.

Tenzin Gyatso

What can I do?

- ◆ Establish a relationship with their staffer
- ◆ Visit face-to-face
- ◆ Call
- ◆ Write
- ◆ Email
- ◆ Invite them to do a site visit at your organization/program (officials currently in office)
- ◆ Use social media
- ◆ Local press

What can I do?

- ◆ Explain why the issue is important to you and to people in your district/state.
- ◆ Explain the consequences that adverse action or failure to act will have on individuals in your state, city, or town.

What can I do?

- ◆ After you make your points, request specific action, and don't be afraid to ask the legislator's position.
- ◆ Follow the visit with a letter or email thanking the member or staffer for their time and briefly summarizing the major issues discussed.

Tips for More Effective Advocacy Efforts

- ◆ Don't be intimidated.
- ◆ Be professional and courteous.
- ◆ Keep it simple.
- ◆ Make it personal – tell stories about people in their districts.
- ◆ Ask for the sale.

Making Your Case

- ◆ **Know the facts:** Use current data to discuss your issue.
- ◆ **Tell stories:** Stories are powerful and persuasive!
- ◆ Use positive language: **Give people something to be FOR, not against.**
- ◆ Be mindful of timing: Pay attention to current news events, lawmakers' schedules, etc.

Look and Play the Part

- ◆ Dress for success
 - Business professional
- ◆ Speak confidently using professional language
 - Speak about your issue in language they can understand.
 - Limit use of acronyms and other terms that are specific only to your program.
 - Limit slang terms.



Look and play the part

- ◆ Smile during introductions.
- ◆ Nice firm handshake with a smile.
- ◆ Look them in the eye when you're speaking with them.
- ◆ Sit or stand attentively.
- ◆ Do not interrupt or get aggressive.
- ◆ Act polite and professional at all times.

What NOT to do!

- ◆ Don't threaten your legislator.
- ◆ Don't be anonymous.
- ◆ Don't pretend to speak for everyone.
- ◆ Don't be a pest.
- ◆ Don't insist on immediate action.
- ◆ Don't speak without doing your homework.

The "Pre-Meeting" Meeting

- ◆ Meet 10 to 15 minutes before each appointment.
- ◆ Review your talking points. What is your message?
- ◆ Review your legislative ask.
- ◆ Choose your words carefully, and don't share too much too early.

The "Pre-Meeting" meeting

- ◆ Review what each person will contribute to the meeting.
- ◆ Select roles/topics that each person will address.
- ◆ Don't be afraid to take notes while in the meeting.

Introductions (2-3 Minutes)

The Hook: Who You Are

- ◆ Everyone should briefly introduce themselves.
- ◆ Talk about where you work, go to school, live, etc...This will help your local official get to know you.
- ◆ BRING BUSINESS CARDS!!

Personal Stories (3-5 Minutes)

The Line: Why You Care

- ◆ Share why you are involved in this initiative – BE BRIEF, CLEAR and CONCISE.
- ◆ Share why it is important to you.
- ◆ Share a poignant and personal story that is relevant to this issue.
- ◆ ***This is the most powerful tool that you have at your disposal!***

A home-delivered meal driver arrived to deliver a meal and heard a faint call for help. He walked around the house and found a bedroom window cracked slightly. He took off the screen, pried the window open, crawled in, and found the 89-year-old gentleman on the floor. He had fallen the night before. His sigh of relief to have help was great. The driver made him comfortable, called the ambulance and waited until they arrived....

The Ask (5-7 Minutes)

The Sinker: What You Want That Person to Do

- ◆ Present the issue, and stay on message.
- ◆ Make your legislative "ask" very clear.
- ◆ Don't be afraid to ask for a commitment.
- ◆ Be sure to listen to all responses.
- ◆ ***Remember "The Ask" is the ultimate goal of your meeting!***

Wrap-up (1-2 Minutes)

Thank You and Pleasantries

- ◆ Point out the information in the leave behind packets or handouts.
- ◆ Thank the official for their time
- ◆ Be sure to send a follow-up thank you via thank-you card or email
- ◆ Be sure to provide any further information that may be needed with your thank-you

Post Meeting Wrap-up

- ◆ Take a few moments after your meeting and review what really happened.
- ◆ Will he or she support your efforts?
- ◆ What follow up is needed? Who will be responsible for follow up?
- ◆ Was anything revealed about how his/her colleagues may feel about this issue?
- ◆ Record your relevant information, and share it as needed.

THANK YOU!
Any questions?

michael.glasgow@gwaar.org

262-432-7977