

Effective Strategies for Budget Advocacy

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Citizen Advocacy: Why is it important?

- Legislators care deeply about how they are perceived in their district
- People care what other people in the community think
- The media cares about what people think
- How do we know what people think?
- Because of how they act...

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Keys

- Be yourself
- Be prepared but don't feel like you have to be an expert
- Be clear, don't get diverted; know the 1-2 takeaway items you want them to keep in mind
- Have a clear ask
- Be dedicated/don't get (too) discouraged!*(quote from Bill Clinton)

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Advocacy Activities

- Call your elected officials (individual calls and action days)
- Meet with your representatives in their district
- Write to them
- Letters to the editor
- Community events – promote the cause
- Get others involved
- Call a reporter!

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Calling elected officials

- Call from time to time (more than once!)
- A Call is easy and goes something like this
 - Introduce yourself and identify yourself as a constituent.
 - State your topic and say **WHAT** you care about, **SUPPORT** or **OPPOSE**, **WHY**
 - Give an example of your personal experience when possible.
 - **ASK** for a **FOLLOW UP RESPONSE**
- **CHECK OUT OUR TIPS (friendly)**

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Writing a letter to the editor

WHY?

People read it

The media pays attention to it, more likely to cover issues they get letters about

- Letters are more likely to be considered if they refer to a recent article or recent event. If you are referring to a recent article, state the date and headline. - Familiarize yourself with talking points Education Voters provides on their website on various educational issues.
- Stick to the basic issue and be timely and local.
- Be brief and to the point. Your letter should be no more than 200-250 words, with no more than three paragraphs.
- Use 1-2 relevant facts when possible to support your point

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Attending town hall meetings/community forums

- Go to meetings where legislators will be present and ask questions—town hall meetings will be key this spring and fall
- Go to community meetings and bring up the topic(s) – make announcements or ask the organization to pass a resolution; ask people to contact you to take action

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Get other people involved!

- Ask someone else to take an action with you
- Take a friend with you
- Host a meeting or house party
- Simply bringing it up in groups can have an impact

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Take it on the road!

- Go to Harrisburg and DC at key times!

PENNSYLVANIA POLITICS:

HOW WE CAN

BUILD PEOPLE POWER

WHERE DO WE START?

- How do we get elected officials to pay attention to the issues that matter to us in the budget process?

THEY ARE CALLED “ELECTEDS
BECAUSE THEY LIVE OR DIE BASED
ON “ELECTIONS.”

HOW ELECTIONS ARE WON

At \$82 million, Pennsylvania governor's race broke spending record

December 6, 2014 12:06 AM



Associated Press

Republican Gov. Tom Corbett, left, and Democratic challenger Tom Wolf take part in a debate Oct. 1 in Philadelphia.

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[Gov.-elect Wolf announces staff picks](#)

HOW ELECTIONS ARE WON

- Contested state senate and house races cost \$50,000-\$200,000 (or more)
- 10,000-20,000 votes total in contested state house races
- 40,000-80,000 votes total in contested state senate races

FORGET MONEY

WHERE WE HAVE IMPACT

- registering voters
- turning out the vote
- contacting legislators to make them aware of how engaged and organized we are on a year round basis
- leveraging our constituencies to highlight strategic/moral choices

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WHAT ARE TIME AND COST EFFICIENT METHODS THAT HAVE REAL IMPACT AND GET TO SCALE?




- teletownhalls
- predictive dialers
- campaign events (it is an election year after all)
- strategic canvassing and phone banking
- real time communication

THE LAW: WHAT 501C3S CAN DO

Connecting... x +

bolderadvocacy.org/navigate-the-rules/influencing-legislation

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ACT!
ADVOCACY CAPACITY TOOL

Advocacy Capacity Tool

BOLDER ADVOCACY BLOG



Robocalling Rules: Before you Pick Up that Phone, Hold that Call—What You Need to Know about Robocalls, Robotexts, and Autodialers

I'M NOT A LAWYER

- * 501c3s can use voter files
- * They can target voters to call as long as predicting someone's political party affiliation is not a criteria
- * Can directly lobby using limited % of org resources
- * More room to do “grassroots lobbying” efforts which are about mobilizing your constituents to contact electeds
- * But a lot of what we need to do isn't even lobbying: it's educating the public—including lawmakers—about the value of the work we do

ABOUT PENNSYLVANIA VOICE

- The goal of Pennsylvania Voice partners is to create integrated, year-round voter engagement programs that activate the growing power of single women, people of color, and youth
- Plus, addressing the ways the system is rigged:
 - voting modernization and access
 - drawing voting maps/redistricting

34+ 501C3, NON-PARTISAN PARTNERS

- Asian Americans United
- ACLU of Pennsylvania
- Action United Education Fund
- BPSOS Delaware Valley
- Casa
- Clean Water Action
- Common Cause
- Conservation Pennsylvania
- Education Voters of Pennsylvania
- Emerge USA
- Equality Pennsylvania
- Fair Elections Legal Network
- Food and Water Watch
- Just Harvest Education Fund
- Keystone Progress Education Fund
- Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights
- League of Women Voters
- Make the Road PA
- New Voices Pittsburgh
- PennPIRG Education Fund
- Penn Environment
- Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center
- Pennsylvania Immigration & Citizenship Coalition
- PIIN (Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network)
- Pittsburgh United
- Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation
- Planned Parenthood Association of PA
- POWER (Philadelphians Organized to Witness Empower & Rebuild)
- POWER-NE
- Project HOME
- Project Vote
- Public Interest Law Center
- Put People First! PA
- SEAMAAC
- Urban League of Philadelphia
- VietLEAD
- Women's Law Center
- Working Families Education Fund

TAKE AWAYS

- Plan your work around electeds' self-interest (hint: it's often to get reelected).
- Your advocacy should be at scale for the elected: who and how many people does s/he need to hear from?
- There are a lot of great tools—many more cost-efficient and useful than current bag of tricks
- But don't forget, it's hard to get people to do the right thing

Questions and Answers

