Building Your Advocacy Network Beyond Health Care

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Congressional Operations

- Training, consulting, research to support a functioning Congress
- 1,000 staff from 300 offices

Citizen Engagement

- Unique studies, trainings, and resources for citizen advocates
- 80,000 Americans from hundreds of organizations
Agenda

• Grassroots vs. Grasstips Advocates
• Researching Lawmakers
• Mapping Your Connections to Congress
• Identifying Potential Stakeholders with an Interest in Your Issue
• Strategies for Keeping Advocates Engaged

• Please Ask Questions!
Grassroots vs. Grasstoppers Advocates

**GrassROOTS**
- No connection to legislators
- Unlikely connection to multiple constituents
- Small asset/economic footprint
- Commonly engages via form email campaigns

**GrassTOPS**
- Possible connections to legislators
- Connection or influence to multiple constituents
- Large asset/economic footprint
- Engages in a variety of ways
  - Personalized email
  - Face to face
Question

If your Member has not arrived at a firm decision on an issue, approximately how many FORM email messages from constituents does it take for your office to consider taking the action requested?
The percentage distribution is as follows:

- Less than 50: 16%
- 50-99: 32%
- 100-199: 20%
- 200-499: 20%
- 500 or more: 11%
Question

If your Member has not arrived at a firm decision on an issue, approximately how many email messages from people who represent many constituents (e.g., organization leader, elected official, business owner) does it take for your office to consider taking the action requested?
Survey Question

When making a recommendation to your boss on a vote or co-sponsorship, how important are the following in your decision-making process?
Position of interest groups which will rate the action on a public scorecard

- Very important
  - 81%
  - 49%
  - 33%
  - 21%
  - 19%
Researching Lawmakers
Legislator Profile

• Research your Members and Senators:
  ▪ Committee Assignments
  ▪ Professional Background
  ▪ Schools Attended
  ▪ Policy Priorities
  ▪ Key Votes on Your Issues
  ▪ Community Affiliations (e.g. clubs, churches, etc.)
  ▪ Potential Family Connections
“How frequently do you experience the following in constituent meetings?”
Didn't know Member's history on policy/issue: 87%

Didn't know the Member's relevant committee assignment(s): 78%

- Very or Somewhat Frequently
Legislator Profile

“It's disappointing when constituents and/or lobbyists come in for meetings and they are clueless about the Congressman, district and committee assignments.”

- House Chief of Staff
Mapping Your Connections to Congress
How to Conduct a Relationship Audit

- Develop System for Storing Data
- Develop SHORT Poll
- Don’t Give Up Until It’s Complete
- It’s NEVER Complete
- Rate the Relationship
Rate the Relationship

• Skills
• Quality of Relationships
• How Trusted They Are by the Legislator
• How Valuable the Legislator is to Your Cause
• How Much Will They Do
Identifying Community Stakeholders
Mental Illness (Depression)

Self Medication/Substance Abuse

Social Impact
- Family & Friends
- Employers
- Education

Financial Impact
- Reduced resources
- Debt
- Food insecurity
- Lack of Housing

Health Effects
- ER visits
- Unpaid medical bills

Community Impact
- Homelessness
- Crime
- Violence

Law Enforcement & Corrections
- Incarceration
- Treatment
- Release

Delayed Access to Prescriptions
Medicaid Reentry Act

Identify the Stakeholders

- Judges, Prosecutors & Defense Attorneys
- Police
- Corrections
- Law Enforcement & Corrections
- Family & Friends
- Hospitals
- Education
- Community Spaces (e.g. Parks & Rec.)
- Business Owners
- Home Owners & Residents
- Faith-based & Community Groups
- Communities & Neighborhoods
- Mental Health Providers
- Hospitals

Medicaid Reentry Act
If you're not at the table, you're on the menu

— Michael Enzi —
When you’re off the menu...

• Legislators know and understand constituents’ and groups’ views on issues and legislation.

When you’re invited to the table...

• Legislators involve you at the genesis of legislation
3 Survey Questions

1) When your Member is trying to understand constituents’ views on pending issues and legislation, how important are the following activities?

2) When your Member is trying to understand interest groups’ views on pending issues and legislation, how important are the following activities?

3) When your Member is trying to develop new ideas for issues and legislation, how important are the following activities?
Somewhat or Very Important

- Town hall meetings: 51% (Constituent Views), 35% (Groups' Views), 52% (New Ideas for Legislation)
- Site visits: 88% (Constituent Views), 73% (Groups' Views), 85% (New Ideas for Legislation)
- Meetings with representatives from interest groups: 76% (Constituent Views), 76% (Groups' Views), 89% (New Ideas for Legislation)
- Meetings with constituents: 95% (Constituent Views), 87% (Groups' Views), 95% (New Ideas for Legislation)
“We in America do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate.”

- Thomas Jefferson