

ADVOCACY 101

June 20, 2019

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Ellen Bauman –Governor’s committee (GCPD), parent

Guests:

Amy Lou Fawell – MAMMA, parent
Thalia Seggelink – MAMMA, parent

Introductions...

- Name
- City
- Any advocacy experience?



Today:

- The Texas Legislature
- Building Relationships
- Developing your advocacy game plan



The Texas Legislature

Senate

- 31 members
- Lt Gov. Dan Patrick
 - Elected via general election
 - Assigns bills (16 committees).
- Committee chairs decide what bills get a hearing and a vote.

House of Representatives

- 150 members
- Speaker Dennis Bonnen
 - Representatives elect him
 - Assigns bills (34 committees)
- Committee chairs decide what bills get a hearing and a vote.



The two-year calendar

- 6 months 'on', 18 months 'off'
- Specifically

(January – May 2019) 86th Legislative Session

(June) Governor signs/vetoes bills

Followed by an 18 month interim session

The two-year calendar

18-month interim:

1. The Lt. Governor and Speaker publish interim charges (issues to study).
2. The Legislative Budget Board begins their budget for next session.
3. Citizens begin asking legislators to turn their idea into a bill.

A typical legislative session...



7K bills

4.5K letters or studies

15K emails

2.5K phone calls

3.5K visitors with handouts

2.5K visits summarized by staff

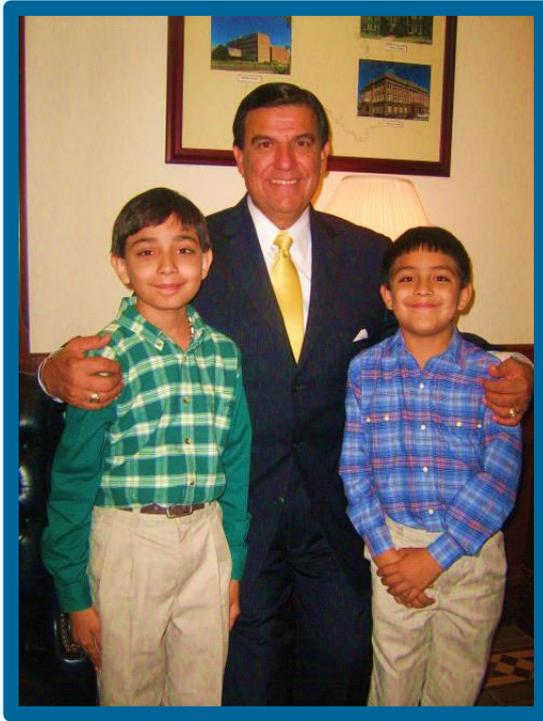
Building Relationships



Making Contact with Legislators



Meeting your own legislator: Local Office



...or attending their local events



Meeting your own legislator: In the Capitol



The Many Types of Contact

- Calling for an appointment
- Emailing an introduction.
- Attending the meeting.
- Thanking them.
- Getting back with requested information.
- Publishing photo with them. (Don't cover the topic.)
- Continuing to make contact and provide updates.

What makes the biggest difference in a legislative session?

A lobbyist?

A story?

Data?

Bringing your family?

A conversation?

Just plain showing up?

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Ranking methods of contact:

1. Face to Face Visits
2. Face to Face Group / Family
3. Telephone call
4. Letter
5. Resolution from organization
6. Petition
7. News report on the issue
8. Form letter (unedited)





Getting started with your game plan

***Someone sends you a hearing
announcement:
There's a bill and a hearing...***

We have several choices (after digesting the bill):

- Locals: Prepare testimony for the hearing. Bring kids!
- Out of towners who cannot travel: Call the author's staff to see if you can email your comments to them.
- Or send me comments to turn in.

“What if we have an Idea for a Bill?”



Define your Issue

- Write 3 bullets.
- Or a 'white paper'.
- Or use Senator Zaffirini's format*:

***Legislative Proposal (LP) Format**

-Purpose of legislation

-Problem legislation addresses

-Current law

-How to address the problem differently than current law.

-Legislative history

-Anticipated support

-Anticipated opposition

-Fiscal implications

Converse with various groups to better define the issue and the solutions.

- Non-profits (TCASE, Arc, CTD, ES, TxP2P, TAS)
- ISDs or Local governments.
- Professionals (education, medicine)
- Legislators and their staff
- Staff at Texas agencies (TEA, HHSC, TWC).
- Agency advisory committees*

***Examples of Advisory Committees:**

TEA: Continuing Advisory Council

Special Education Community Stakeholder Committee

HHSC: Behavioral Health Advisory Committee

Early Childhood Intervention Advisory Committee

IDD System Redesign Advisory Committee

Policy Council for Children and Families

StarKids Advisory Committee

Texas Autism Council

- Typical committee:



Developing your proposed idea:

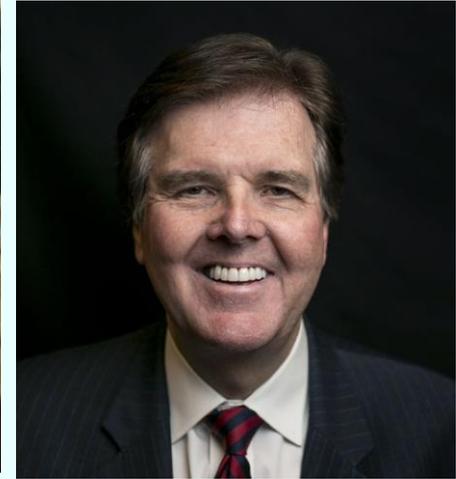
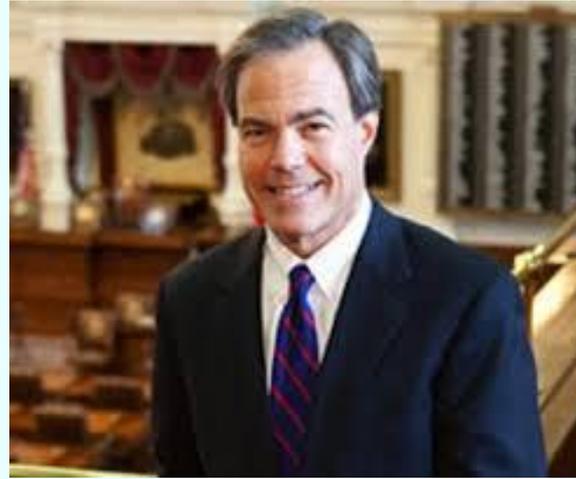
1. Identify Partners and Opponents
2. Interview the other side.
 - Anticipate arguments.
 - Understand opposing viewpoints.
3. Make legislative appointments. (Reach out to organizations to help you.)
4. Prepare for your visits, how you will navigate any barriers.



Leslie and Zach's plan



They decided to make visits in this order:



1. Committee members:
Public Health, Human Services, State Affairs, Criminal Justice, Agriculture, Finance/Appropriations.
1. Speaker, Lt. Governor, Governor.
2. Remaining Legislators.



They built a relationship with each office

- Challenge yourself to connect.
- Make yourself a resource, follow up.
- Bring new faces.
- Be aware of their schedule.
- Don't speak for another organization or individual without authorization.





Told their story!



1. Divide tasks with others to maximize time and hit all points.
2. Listen and respond.
3. Be organized, assign one person to watch the clock.
4. Create materials to leave behind, with contact information.
5. Follow up with data requested during the meeting.

A legislator then files the bill and it has a number.

Go to Texas Legislature Online to sign up for alerts on that specific bill.

As it travels, you will receive emails or texts.



Lucky bills

1. Each bill will be assigned to a committee
2. The committee might decide to hear it.
3. It might get voted out of committee
4. It might get to the whole House or Senate for a floor vote.
5. If it passes, it will travel to the other half of the Legislature.
6. ***Repeat the first four steps.***
7. Once the bill has passed both houses, the Governor will then sign or veto it.

Telling your story through testimony

- Begin with your name, who you represent, and your position on the bill. Then tell your story. (Usually one page at 12-font equals three minutes).
- In the hearing, try to chat about your issue and not read your paper aloud.
- Include or attach data. Pull from the work others have done. Make sure to give credit.



Also...

- Write it early and send it to bill author, and to friendly committee members.
- Staff will place your testimony in their bosses' hearing binder and will plan questions to ask you, which will give you additional time.



Provide your issue to the media



Are people less likely to be mis-quoted on camera than in the paper? YES!



Take Advantage of Social Media

‘Add’ legislators and track what’s going on on both sides; what’s important to them, what they oppose.

- a. Document your advocacy activities.
- b. Use Hootsuite, posting to all accounts at once
- c. Share/retweet things.
- d. Read statewide news.

Addressing the Challenges

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Seven bill experiences, all were unique...

Automatic test at birth for velocardiofacial syndrome

One-mom advocacy

Her bill passed in one session.

Carried a fiscal note

Knew attorneys in the Capitol.

Did not visit every single office



Eliminating the 'R' word in state statute

Passed in two sessions.

No fiscal note

Key organizations worked together

Did not visit every single office



Cannabidiol oil (CBD) for intractable epilepsy

Passed in one session.

Carried a fiscal note

One family made 400+ visits.

2 bill hearings/ 2 family days.

Epilepsy Foundation hired a lobbyist



Safety Cameras in SpEd Classrooms

Individuals and a few advocacy organizations

A lobbyist, hired by a mom

Push-back from ISDs and their attorneys

The committee didn't schedule the bill, meaning the bill would die.

The lobbyist (a former legislator) knew the rules of the House. Was able to use an obscure rule to request a hearing.



After passage, Maggie Suter tracked the progress of camera installations across Texas, as a favor to Senator Lucio, useful prior to writing a clean-up bill.

Improving Teacher Prep for Regular Educators

Christine Broughal, plus TxP2P, CTD, ES, TxSER.

Held numerous meetings with educators to gain buy-in.

The Senate loves it. House Education loves it. House calendars has twice caused it to never gain a floor vote.



Individual Drug Formularies for the MCOs

Protecting Texas Fragile Kids, an organization of parents, made certain that the MCOs were not allowed to develop their own individual drug formularies, by advocating against the MCO's bill.

This past session they got two bills passed.



Cannabidiol oil (CBD) with trace THC for Autism

Thalia and AmyLou were able to add autism to the original bill that covered other conditions.

Passed a few days ago.

Carried a fiscal note

More about their story...





Two sessions
ago....





WEBINAR SIGNUP

Medical Marijuana
for Autism and Seizures

Wednesday, September 30th
1:00pm ET



One session ago...



This session...



Questions?

