

# Strategies for Successful Public Policy Advocacy

*Stephanie Smith Lee*

## Getting Started

- Work with a non-profit, non-partisan group
- Start a governmental affairs committee for your group
- Organize and mobilize networks and coalitions
- Identify areas of agreement and priority for action
- Develop a strategic plan

## Getting Clear about what to do

- Carefully research the issue
- Clearly identify needed action: draft legislative/policy language if necessary
- Frame the debate in positive terms
- Learn the policy process and identify key policy makers and “champions”

## Taking Action

- Prepare fact sheets/position papers outlining the issue, background and needed action (keep updated)
- Use NDSC info bulletins/fact sheets/alerts on national issues
- Prepare clear, concise action alerts and distribute
- Maintain/use social media, Facebook groups, email lists or other internet groups and websites, but remember importance of personal contacts
- Involve and mobilize self-advocates, parents, family members, professionals
- Contact policy makers (visits, letters, calls, testimony, rallies)
- Tie personal stories to the policy objective
- Testify at hearings, request additional hearings, speak at committee meetings, town hall meetings

## Building Relationships with Policy Makers on an Ongoing Basis

- Remember to be bipartisan!
- Divide and conquer – divide up who will be key contact for each policy maker
- Get to know individual policymakers in both political parties
- Invite them to “Walks” or other fundraisers, picnics, events – ask them to speak, say a few words, or at least recognize their attendance
- Take their photo with your group and share the photos with the media and on social media
- Speak with them at community events
- Get to know staff as well
- Become a resource: develop long-term relationships

## Building Support through media coverage

- Press releases, requests for media coverage of events, after-event info, use social media
- Letters to the editor, op-ed pieces
- Share photos, testimony, letters to policymakers, and info about your policy efforts with media/on social media
- Personal contacts with media – become a source

## Follow-up

- Sometimes success is incremental – go the next mile
- When a law is passed, that’s just the first step – next are regulations, policy guidance, implementation
- Say thank you with a press release, letters to the editor, letters to policymakers, personal contacts