

National Down Syndrome Congress Convention
Speaker Spotlight



**CANDACE WHITING &
MELISSA SILVERMAN**



Using Your Story: Elevator Speeches and One-Pagers



**NATIONAL
DOWN SYNDROME
CONGRESS**

Melissa Silverman

- 41 Years Old
- NDSC Board of Directors 2007-2009
- NDSC Self-Advocacy Council (SAC) 2009-Present
- National Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition (NDAC) Member
- Attended Every NDSC Youth & Adult Convention Since 1997
- Chesapeake Down Syndrome Parent Group Board Member for 12 Years
- Special Olympics - Swimming and Soccer
- Part Time Professional Magician
- Drama Clubs
- Graduated HS with an Academic Diploma
- Earned a 90-Hour Child Care Certification
- Teacher Assistant 2005-Present



NDSC & Melissa



Self-Advocate Council



Personal Advocacy

I served on the Board of Directors for the Chesapeake Down Syndrome Parent Group for 12 years and the NDSC Board of Directors for 3 years.

It is important to represent people with Down syndrome and to teach them that we are more alike than different. I have been a speaker for many groups from elementary to college students and parent groups. My talk is “See the Possibilities.” I teach them that I can hold down a job, play sports, work out at the gym, enjoy concerts and theater and act in a drama club.



Maryland Governor
Wes Moore



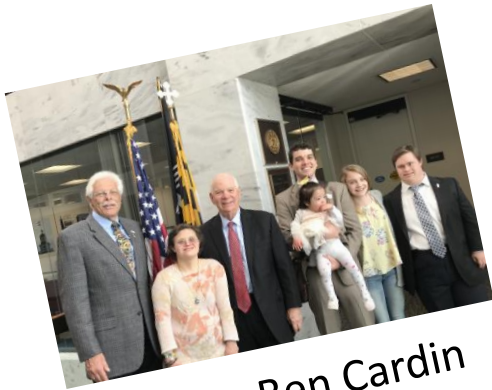
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Personal Advocacy

- **We, as self-advocates, need to speak about issues that are important to us, and serving on the Board of Directors in your local organization is a great place to begin.**
- **You can also join the NDSC's National Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition (NDAC).**

Legislative Advocacy

For the past 12 years, I have met with my state senators and delegates on Maryland's Developmental Disabilities Day in Annapolis, Maryland. I have been part of the NDSS "Day on the Hill" in Washington, DC for many years.



Senator Ben Cardin



Maryland Speaker of the
House of Delegates
Speaker Jones



Congressman Jamie Raskin

SAMPLE LEAVE BEHIND BIOGRAPHY TEMPLATE

Dear Representative/Senator _____.

Opening

My name is _____, and I am from [NAME OF HOMETOWN]

_____.

Introduction of yourself and a few sentences about yourself. You might include:

- Age
- Where you work or go to school
- Hobbies
- Interests
- Goals

The Ask

- I am asking you to sponsor XXXX and why.

Always say thank you!

Your name and contact information including:

Address
Phone
Email

TIP:

**ALWAYS INCLUDE
AT LEAST ONE
PICTURE OF
YOURSELF**

One-Pager Template for Legislative Meetings

You can find a copy on the NDSC
Website

-under Policy & Advocacy

-under Advocacy Trainings

-under SA One-Pager Template

We also have paper copies on
the tables



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Tell Your Story: One-Pagers

Tell Your Personal Story

- Your most powerful tool is your story! Telling an elected official how something will impact your life is powerful.
- A one-pager can be used for in-person meetings; or you can mail or email it to your legislator for virtual meetings.
- Update it regularly with new information and new legislative asks.
- Do not read your one pager to your legislator or staff member but rather leave a copy with them.

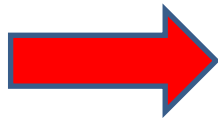
**What is
an Ask?**

An ask is when you specifically request that an elected official, committee member, or other leader support a specific bill or not support a specific bill, motion, or idea.

Tell Your Story: One-Pagers

Remember to always include:

- Contact information including you name, street address and zip code (constituents have power), phone and email. Including Twitter handle, Instagram, or other social media is optional
- Tell them where you live
- A few sentences about yourself (where you work, go to school, your interests)
- The Ask and why you are asking – how does this impact you, your friends, or someone you care for
- Thank you
- Photo – action or otherwise. This is very important so that they will remember you!



Melissa Silverman
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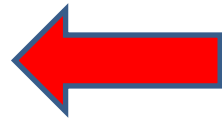
Dear Delegate White,



My name is Melissa Silverman, and I am one of nearly 7,500 Marylanders who have Down syndrome. I live in Owings Mills, Maryland with my parents.



I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you. I graduated from Franklin High School in 2001, earning an academic diploma. I then went to CCBC in the Single Step Program and earned the 90-hour childcare certification. For the past 18 years I have been working in childcare with children from 2 years old through elementary school age. Presently, I work for Caliday in the before and after school care at Franklin Elementary School.



As a member of the Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition and the National Down Syndrome Congress, some of the issues that are most important to me are the ability to make my own choices and have control over what I want to do through the self-direction program. Also, I want affordable housing options and transportation options.

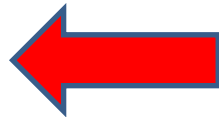


I am writing to ask that you give a favorable report out of committee for HB294 County Boards of Education - Due Process Proceedings for Children With Disabilities - Burden of Proof. This bill would level the playing field for families and students who disagree with their school system about an important decision regarding the placement of their child or special education services their child needs to be successful. This bill will simply require school systems to defend their position first if there is a disagreement about a student's program, placement or services that cannot be settled at the IEP table. Right now, only parents who can afford expensive attorneys and expert witnesses have any chance of winning and even then they hardly ever do. This system isn't fair.



As one of your constituents, I want to thank you for your time and consideration, and for all that you do to improve the lives of individuals with Down syndrome throughout the state of Maryland. We appreciate you!

Sincerely,



Melissa



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For more information

- You can find copies of one-pager examples and the one-pager template on the NDSC Website. This is the link <https://www.ndsccenter.org/political-advocacy/advocacytrainings/>
- If you have questions, we will take those at the end. You can always email me. My contact information is on the convention app.

Candace Whiting



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Candace Whiting

- Born in Salt Lake City, Utah
- Raised in Maryland
- Lives currently in Melbourne, Florida
- CEO of Great Life Unlimited
- Graduated with a full MD HS diploma in 2005
- Currently serves on NDSS Board of Directors
- Currently serves on DSACF Board of Directors
- Serves as a member of the NDAC
- Serves of Advisory Board for NDSS 321Go!
- Special Olympics Athlete



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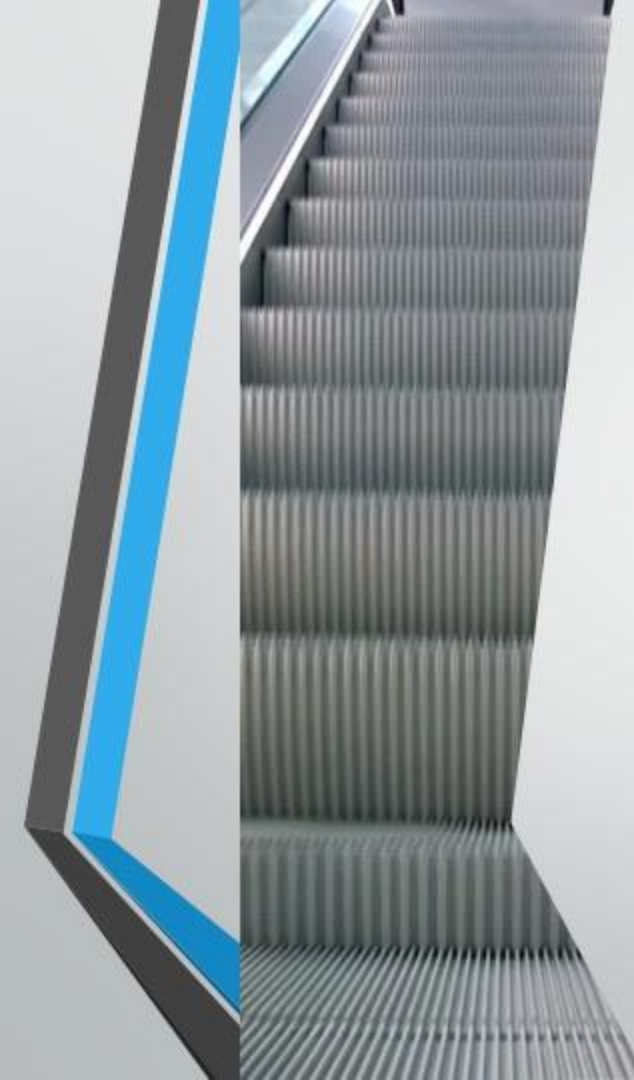
Leadership Opportunities

- I am the CEO Of Great Life Unlimited, a public speaking company. I have had the opportunity to speak at schools, civic organizations, and several conferences, including NDSC. It is important for me to be the voice for those who don't have a strong voice.






Legislative Advocacy



What is an Elevator Speech?

- **An elevator speech is a short description of an idea, person, or company that explains in a way such that any listener can understand it in a short period of time. This description typically explains who, what, why, and how.**
- **An elevator speech can be used with elected officials, business and community leaders, healthcare providers or anyone who you want to educate.**






Your Elevator Speech

- Use the template on the table to create your elevator speech.
- When we are done, we will have a few people read their elevator speeches.





Parts of an Elevator Speech

- Describe who you are
- One sentence about yourself
- Describe what you do
- One or two statements
- Describe who you are impacting
- What makes you unique
- Provide a one-pager and/or a card with your contact information



Example

- Hello! My name is Candace Whiting. I am a professional speaker and the CEO of my own motivational speaking company, Great Life Unlimited. I am on the Board of Directors for NDSS, DSACF and a member of NDAC. My goal is to help people realize their full potential. We need your help improving policies that increase opportunities for people with Down syndrome. I want to be the voice for those people who don't have a strong voice.



Write Your Elevator Speech





Share
Your
Elevator
Speech

We are now going to
have a few of you
share your speeches.



Who wants to share
their elevator speech?



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Contact Information

- If you have any questions, feel free to contact me
- Email: candaceunlimited@gmail.com
- Website: greatlifeunlimited.com
- Facebook: Candaceunlimited, Great Life Unlimited
- Instagram: Candaceunlimited, Great Life Unlimited



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