

# Advocacy 101

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# groundWork

## Statewide Membership:

- More than 4,000 members statewide
- 15 regional coordinating committees that encompass 39 counties



# groundWork Agenda

- Access to high-quality early care and education for all children in Ohio
- Voluntary assessment screening, and treatment for social and emotional problems for children from birth to six
- Increased access to health services and supports for children birth to age six
- Voluntary access to full-day kindergarten for every child in Ohio



## **WHAT IS THE CENTER FOR COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS?**

- Nonpartisan research & policy organization for improving quality of life through health & social services, & economic opportunity.
- Not just a think tank, but a change agent—turning research & good ideas into action!

## **WHAT DO WE DO?**

- Research & evaluation of health & social issues, & public policy.
- Advise local, state, & federal elected officials & civic leaders.
- Promote a strong environment for economic development.
- Stimulate collaboration between public and private interests.
- Serve as a neutral convener and broker for government, business, nonprofits, & citizens.



# Advocacy vs. Lobbying

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- Advocacy is the umbrella term, and involves identifying, embracing and promoting a cause.
- Lobbying is a specifically focused form of advocacy, with the purpose to influence legislation. Only some methods of advocacy are considered lobbying.

# But ... Is Lobbying Legal?

**YES!**

Completely, absolutely, totally...

Lobbying by nonprofits -- tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code -- is absolutely legal.



# Lobbying & Advocacy Activities

- OK for an Organization
  - Write and encourage people to write letters
  - Meet with/speak to public officials about legislation
  - Testify at a public hearing
  - Provide research, analysis and commentary
  - Publicly endorse or oppose specific legislation
  - Invite an official to visit
- Off Limits for an Organization (but not individual)
  - Raise funds for candidates
  - Publicly support or oppose a candidate

Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest  
[www.clpi.org](http://www.clpi.org)



# Why Advocacy?

*“If you’re not at the table,  
you’re on the table”*



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A Firm Footing  
for Children, Schools,  
Families and Communities

# Reasons to Get Involved

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Don't assume someone else will!

Government controls funding to  
many non-profit organizations

Government policies affect everyone

Policymakers care about and need your expertise



# Who Represents Me?

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**The U.S. Senate**

**The U.S. House of Representatives**

**The Ohio Senate**

**The Ohio House of Representatives**

**State Board of Education**

**County Commissioner/Executive**

**County Council**

**Mayor**

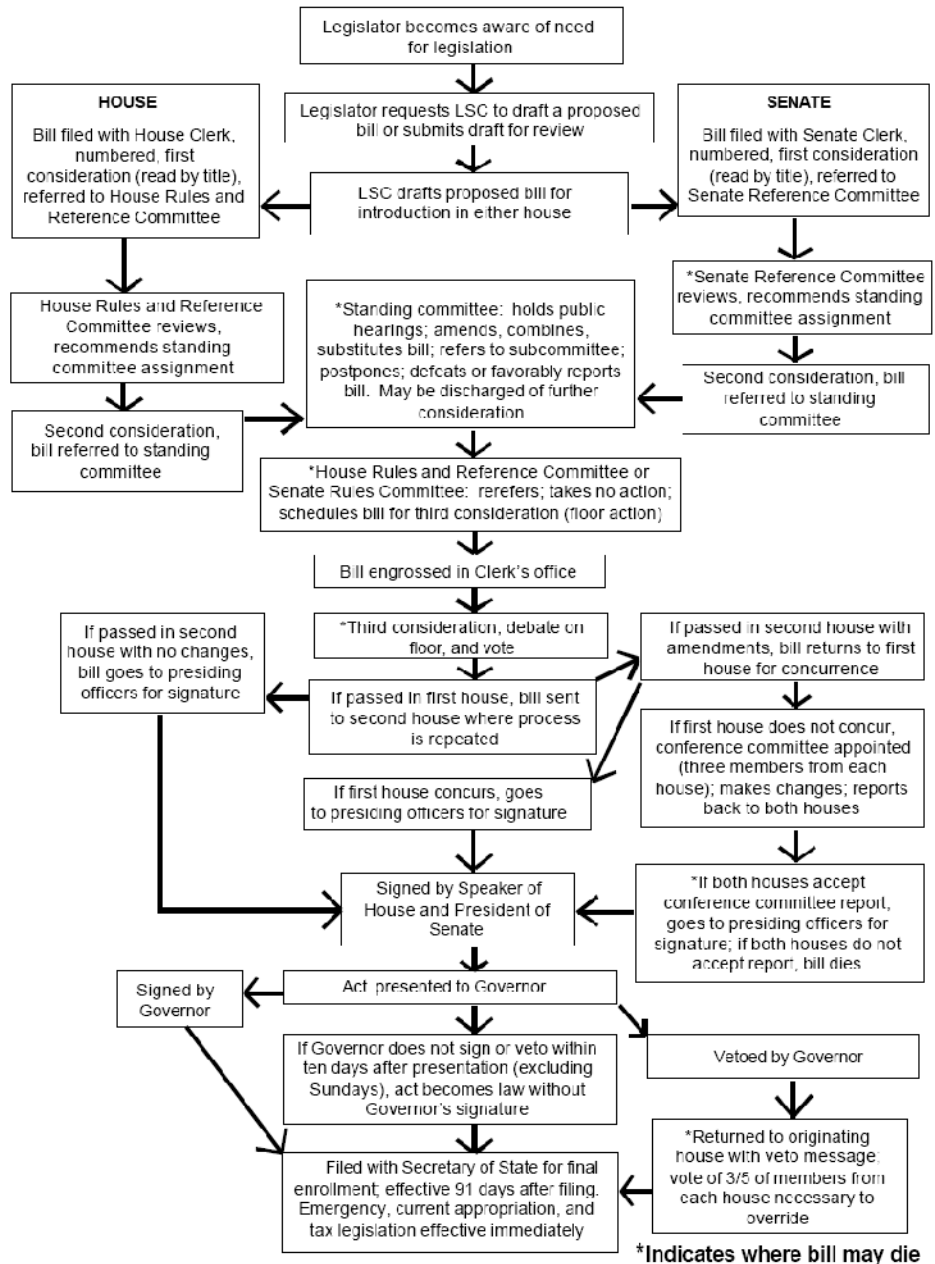
**City Council**



# The Ohio Budget

- Biennium Budget (Two-year)
- Agencies submit budgets from July-October
- Governor submits the proposed budget in February of the preceding year (i.e. in February of 2011 for SFY 2012-2013 budget)
- House first
- Moves to Senate
- Is finalized in conference committee in June
- Governor must sign by June 30th

## How a Bill Becomes a Law in Ohio



# Relationships Matter

- Don't wait until you need something to begin.
- One-on-one contact is ideal
- Staff counts. They are the conduit and travel guide.
- Truly understand their best interest – and be honest.



# Target Decision Makers

- Determine who is a decision maker for your issue
- Find people with relationships to that legislator
- Utilize your relationships with business and community leaders.



# Meeting Preparation

- Research their personal history
  - Bios on their website
  - League of Women Voters
  - AARP pocket directory
  - Web Searches
- Review voting record
- Ask colleagues



# Meeting Preparation

- Remember - some burned bridges can never be rebuilt!
- No group discussions or disagreements when meeting with legislators.
- Term limits matter!



# Meeting Preparation

- If you can't meet with the legislator or aide – try telephone calls, a letter, sending an E-mail
- Site visits are a GREAT way to educate legislators



# Meeting Preparation

## Organizational Mission

Purpose - Population – Protocol

## Elevator Pitch (30-60 seconds)

*“Preparing children for kindergarten may be the single most effective way to foster their future success”* In order for our schools and communities to succeed, we need to make sure that Ohio’s youngest children have opportunities for healthy early childhood development.

## Policy “Ask”

Reasonable List of priorities, rationale, and timeline to achieve your mission



# Deliver your Message Quickly



- Ask about their priorities
- Prepare a one-page leave behind
- TAKE NOTES
- Prepare for 30 minutes; expect 15
- Go the extra mile – supply requested information.
- Cast your organization as a resource.

# But Deliver it well

- Present the truth, don't stretch the truth. Your credibility is your strength.
- Don't overcomplicate it. Use simple, memorable statistics and numbers, but not too many. No formulas.
- State the thing you most want them to remember first.
- Move people to a conclusion; never force them into it.
- Prepare yourself for reactions and responses.

# Remember the Details

- Build relationships
- Provide information
- Always follow up
- Monitor local press for opportunities
- Every voice counts!



# groundWork Tools

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- E-Advocacy
- Letters to the Editor
- Blog
- E-Blast
- Statewide Conference Calls

[www.groundworkohio.org](http://www.groundworkohio.org)



# Working with the Media

## Who to Contact?

- Reporters, Editors, Radio
- Use groundWork media directory, other directories
- Large and Small Newspapers, Suburban, Local Papers
- Popular Radio Stations, Talk Shows, Public Radio



# Establish a Relationship

- Keep a current list of reporters and who cover early care and education issues in your area
- Maintain a clipping file of relevant stories
- Introduce yourself with a phone call or a get-to-know-you meeting

*For a sample of relevant stories, visit our website  
“In the Media” at [www.groundworkohio.org](http://www.groundworkohio.org)*



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# Editorial Board Meetings

- Meetings with editorial editors
- Plan for 30 minutes, prepare for longer
- Provide information on your issue and organization
- Ask them to cover issue on the editorial page; print letters to the editor and op-eds on that issue



# Establish a Relationship: Media Kits

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Prepare a media kit for reporters including:

- Calendar of events
- Press releases
- Fact sheets on your issue
- Information about your organization
- Your contact information

# Media Opportunities

## Broadcast Media

### Radio

- Traditional Radio Programming
- Call-in Talk Shows
- Public Affairs Programs
- Actualities (Sound Bytes)

### Television (Network and Cable)

- Community Bulletin Boards
- Guest Commentary
- Public Service Announcements

## Electronic Media

Blogs

Listservs

Online Groups

E-Newsletters

Podcasts

RSS Feeds

## Print Media (Newspapers & Magazines)

Editorials

Op-eds

Press Releases

Letters to the Editor

Feature Stories



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# Press Releases

## **Press Releases are great tools because:**

- Give the media information that is useful and accurate about your organization.
- Gain public confidence and strengthen public image for your organization.
- They give the public a better understanding about what you are.
- They help to promote your mission.

## **Tips on Writing a Press Release:**

- **Keep it short.**
- **Pick an angle.**
- **Start strong.**
- **Refer to more information.**
- **Center “# # #” at the bottom of the page**
- **Print your release on high quality paper**



# Letter to the Editor

## Letters to the Editor are great tools because:

- They reach a large audience.
- They are often monitored by elected officials.
- They can bring up information not addressed in a news article.
- They create an impression of widespread support or opposition to an issue.

## Tips on Writing Letters to the Editor

- Respond in a timely way!
- Make it legible.
- Keep it short.
- Make it clear.
- Make references to the newspaper- indicate to what you are responding.
- Check with paper for word limits and other requirements.
- Include your contact information.



# Feature Stories

Generate interest

Answer questions

Provide further information

Good for Broadcast and Print Media



*Berea Children's Home & Family Services 2011 Budget Story*



# In Conclusion:

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*“Nothing could be worse than the fear that one had given up too soon, and left one unexpended effort that might have saved the world.”*

*– Jane Addams*

# Other Resources:

Advocates for Ohio's Future  
Center for Community Solutions  
Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest  
National Governors' Association  
National Women's Law Center  
Project Vote Smart  
Urban Institute  
Votetocracy

advocatesforohio.org  
communitysolutions.com  
clpi.org  
www.nga.org  
www.nwlc.org  
votesmart.org  
www.urban.org  
votetocracy.com

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