Advocacy 101: How to Advocate Effectively

Presented by Kuna Tavalin
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The Basics: What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is:
- Organized action in support of an idea or cause; constituents educating elected officials
- The power of collective voice: When we come together around a single cause, we amplify it

Can I advocate?
- Yes! You do not need to be an expert in policy to advocate, you are already an expert at what you do in this field
The Key Ingredients for Effective Advocacy

- Being a constituent/bringing forward a local context
- Presenting expertise or first-hand experience
- Crafting a compelling case
- Creating relationships

I Don’t Follow Politics So I Can’t Advocate...

Wrong!!!

Your experience and knowledge are invaluable assets to lawmakers.

- Lawmakers are not expert on every issue before them
- Lawmakers rely on outside information to help inform decision making
- You are not expected to be an expert on policymaking—your expertise lies in the work you do every day
Effective Advocacy Accomplishments

- Educating lawmakers about CEC priorities
- Connecting policy priorities to a Member’s home district or state
- Building relationships with Members and staff
- Establishing oneself as an expert on a specific topic and becoming a trusted resource

Advocacy Gets Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CEC Emergency IDEA Funding Request, March 2020*</th>
<th>Supporting Children with Disabilities During COVID-19 Act</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ $11.3b for IDEA Part B</td>
<td>✔ $11b for IDEA Part B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ $500m for IDEA Part C</td>
<td>✔ $500m for IDEA Part C</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ $400m for Section 619</td>
<td>✔ $400m for Section 619</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ $300m for IDEA Part D</td>
<td>✔ $300m for IDEA Part D</td>
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*Over 8,000 letters sent
Next Steps

➢ Participate in the annual Special Education Legislative Summit, where you can join with your colleagues to advocate!

➢ Learn about weekly updates from Washington, DC in the Policy Insider:
  Check your inbox on Fridays or find it at https://exceptionalchildren.org/policy-insider

➢ Reach out with any questions!
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