Class 4 – Advocacy tools
AGITATORS ARE A SET OF INTERFERING, MEDDLING PEOPLE, WHO COME DOWN TO SOME PERFECTLY CONTENTED CLASS OF THE COMMUNITY AND SOW SEEDS OF DISCONTENT AMONGST THEM. THAT IS THE REASON WHY AGITATORS ARE SO ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. WITHOUT THEM, IN OUR INCOMPLETE STATE, THERE WOULD BE NO ADVANCE TOWARD CIVILIZATION. -- OSCAR WILDE
Advocacy vs lobbying

**Advocacy**
- Much bigger than lobbying
- Any activity meant to change government policy

**Lobbying**
- Very specific, narrow meaning
- CGS says “communicating directly or soliciting others to communicate with any official . . . For the purpose of influencing any legislative or administrative action”
Working with a lobbyist

• Lobbyist get a bad rap – the system would not work without them
• Specialists, parties, issue areas, policy and process
• Respect their expertise, as they respect yours
  – Don’t tell them how to do their job
  – Don’t make assumptions about the process, what works
• Trust them, do what they tell you to do
  – even if it seems silly – my story
• But do your own homework
• Keep close communication
• Be realistic, listen to them
  – Oral health story
Persuasion, creating relationships

- Know as much as you can about your target
- Meet them where they are
- Be friendly, helpful
- Be sure what you want to say, practice
- Get it down to an “elevator ride”
- Understand that sometimes the answer is no
- Create a long term relationship, check in even when you don’t need anything
Learn the ropes

RESTRICTED AREA
LEGISLATORS AND STAFF ONLY
legislative advocacy

• This is often what people first think of as “advocacy” or lobbying
• Legislative process is far more open and responsive to the public than other branches
• Public input is a formal part of the process
legislative advocacy

• Patience – rare that a bill passes in its first year
• Perspective – understand that your issues have to get in the queue
• Understand and respect the system – experience has value, seek it out
• Create relationships – most important of all
• Offer solutions – don’t just complain
• Respect your lobbyist
how a bill becomes a law

• Sponsors
• Committees
• Chairs, screening, JF days
• Hearings, Meetings, Changes
• Referrals
• Calendars, both houses, screening
• Amendments, Christmas trees and vehicles
• Governor signs (or not)
• Official process
how a bill becomes a law

how a bill really becomes a law

- Choosing a champion/shepherd
- Backrooms, good intelligence/gossip
- Fiscal notes, is it in the budget?
- Agency support/resistance
- Attentiveness -- 1000s of ways to kill a bill, millions of ways for a bill to just putter out
- Politics, old scores and other baggage
Rules and customs for navigating the Capitol & LOB

• Act professionally
• Wear comfortable, conservative clothing
• Leave lots of time for finding parking, metal detectors
• Bring fact sheets, copies of testimony – more than required for hearing
• Lobbyists and badges
• Velvet ropes and notes into the chamber
• No cell phones in hearing rooms or galleries
• Connecting with a legislator
• Hearings, Committee meetings
• JF day, End of session drama
legislators – who are they?

- Part time
  - Base pay is $28,000
- Work for their voters
- Not wonks
- They need your input
- Diverse
- Do not make assumptions about their views, ask them
- Rely on staff heavily
- The importance of leadership
- They are politicians, but in a good way
the importance of legislative staff

- Usually longer tenure than most legislators
- They run the process
- Overworked, many are open to your help/input
- Partisan vs. non-partisan
- OFA, OLR, LCO, committee staff, caucus staff, aides
- Can be incredibly effective champions
- Often the only route to backrooms
- Find those who care about your issues
They just have to vote yes
Legislative tools

- Legislative breakfasts
- Writing letters
- How to call a legislator
- Visiting with policymakers
- Writing effective fact sheets
- How to testify at a public hearing
- How to research statutes
- How to work with a lobbyist
- How to work with campaigns
- Directions and rules and customs for the Capitol and LOB
- More on how a bill becomes a law
I congratulated a DSS official on her promotion and asked "Isn't it great being up there where the buck stops?" Her answer: "I'm not sure where the buck stops. I don't really think that it's here. But I have seen it roll over us at times."
administrative advocacy

- Very powerful
- Include them early – both top and bottom of food chain
- Create relationships of trust -- can be champions and important sources of info
- They implement the laws – they are the devil in the details
- They are not elected, they don’t answer to you or to voters
- Appointed vs. civil service
- Agency turf issues
freedom of information

- State and federal FOI laws
- Powerful tool
- Agencies usually cooperative
- Right to obtain records and attend meetings, public notices, with reasonable exceptions
- Right to notice of upcoming meetings and agendas
- Rights to inspection during business hours
- Can be hard to get access to data
- Check for yourself first, it can be a burden on the agency
regulations

- Statutes give guidance, regulations give detail
- How to find them, if they exist
- Process – Reg.s Review Committee
- Under-appreciated by lobbyists, legislators
- Other planning documents
other tools

- Media
- Coalitions
- Lobbyists
- Judicial advocacy
- Electoral advocacy
Don’t leave without closing the deal
tips no one should forget

• Always be polite
• Say thank you, to everyone who helps
• Get your story straight
• NEVER make up an answer
• Patience
• Perspective
• Always follow through
• Don’t take anything personally
• Be flexible
A wish is worthless unless action follows. -- Anonymous
Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not.

-- Dr. Seuss

For help – CT Health Policy Project Advocacy Toolbox
www.cthealthpolicy.org/toolbox