

Class 4 – Advocacy tools

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**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



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

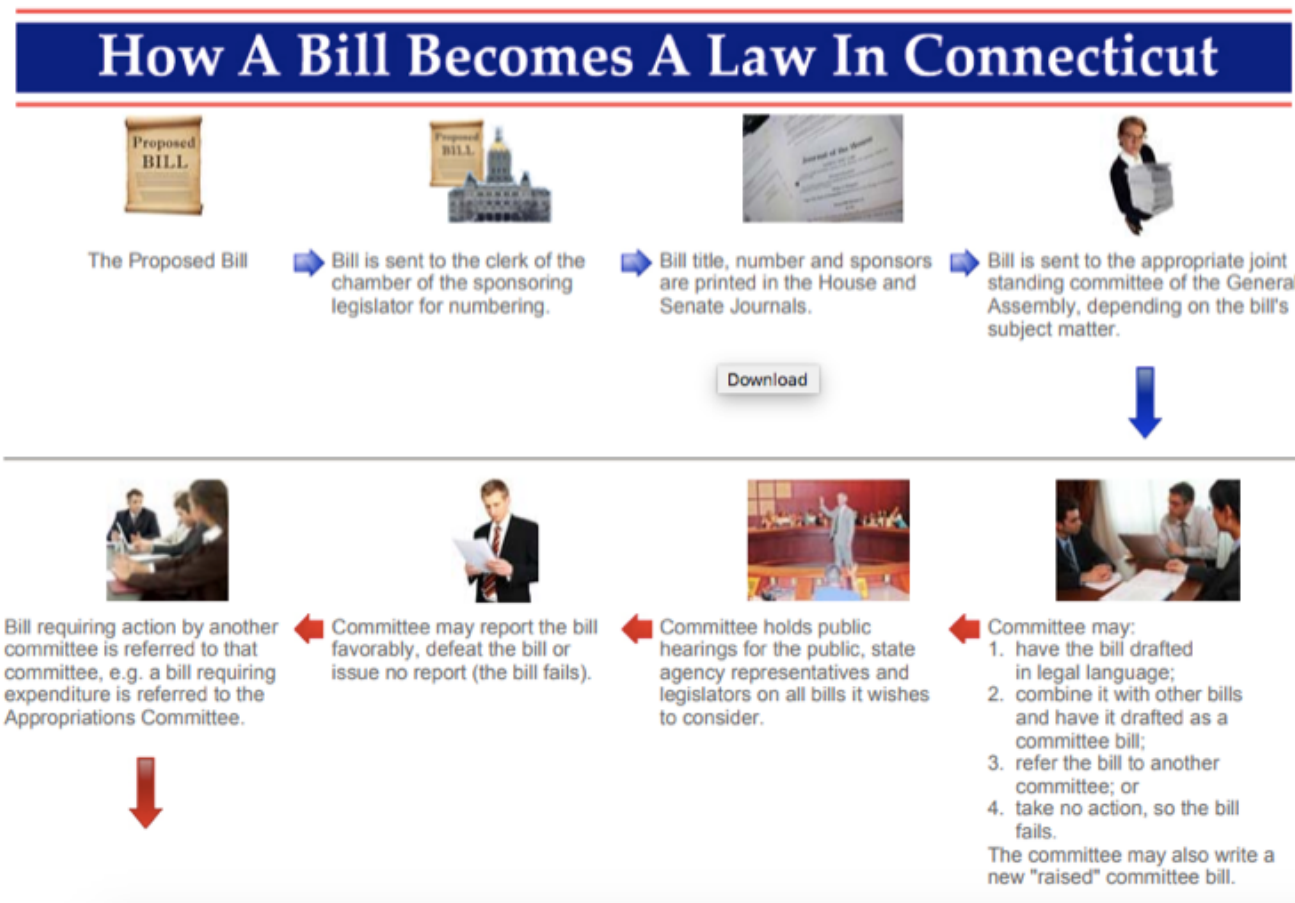
- **Patience** – rare that a bill passes in its first year
- **Perspective** – understand that your issues have to get in the queue
- **Understand and respect the system** – experience has value, seek it out
- **Create relationships** – most important of all
- **Offer solutions** – don't just complain
- **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
 - <https://www.cga.ct.gov/html/bill.pdf>

how a bill becomes a law

- Official process-- <https://www.cga.ct.gov/html/bill.pdf>



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."

CT Health Policy Project Advocacy Toolbox

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 person wearing a dark blue sweater is holding a large white rectangular sign in front of a light-colored wall. The sign contains a quote in bold, dark blue text.

**A wish is worthless
unless action
follows. --
Anonymous**



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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