

# ABCs of Effective Advocacy

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[cadca.org](http://cadca.org)

**When it comes to advocacy, do you  
sometimes feel like this?**



**Or this?**



**Or this?**

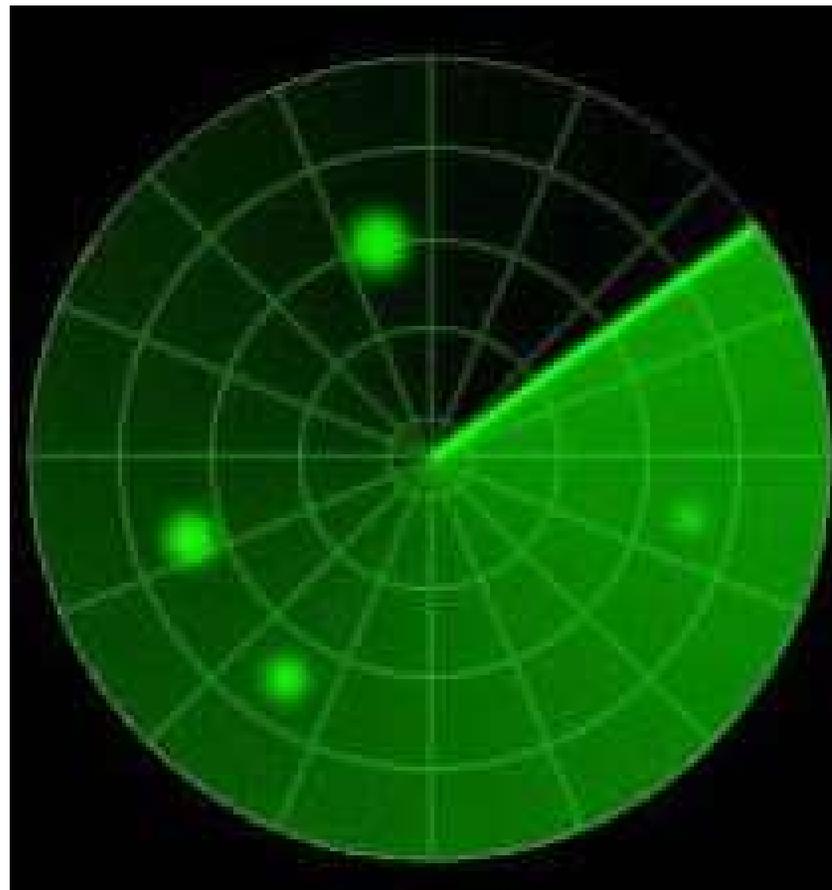


**Hopefully at the end of  
this presentation you will  
feel like this**



# **How Can You Be The Most Effective Advocate For Prevention Now and in the Future?**

# Get On The Policy Radar Screen



# Why Is It Important To Be On the Policy Radar Screen?

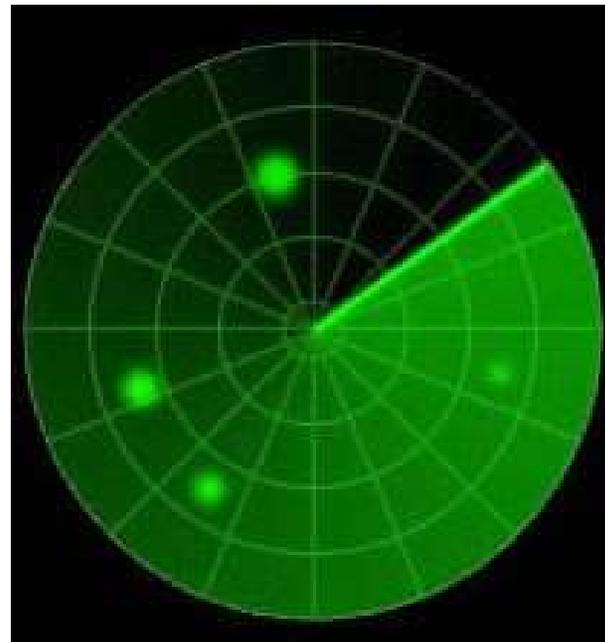
➤ Because we are competing with every other major program and issue:

- Obesity
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Public safety
- Environmental issues



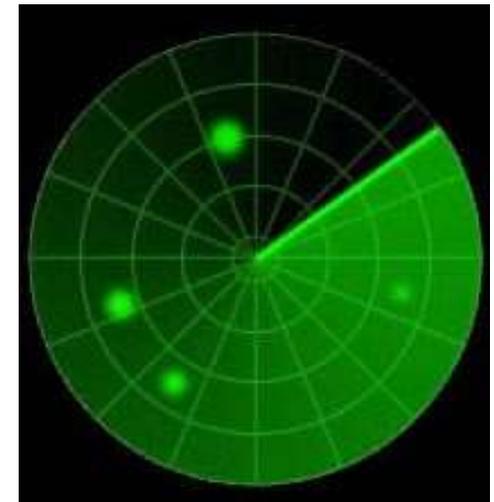
# Why Is This Important?

Because if we are not on the radar screen, we can't effect change



## How Does An Issue Get On The Policy Radar Screen?

- It requires an organized, **vocal**, **visible**, and **valuable** constituency.
- Willing to be forceful enough to do what it takes to put their issue on the top of elected official's agenda.



**You all need to**



**Be Vocal!**

# You all need to

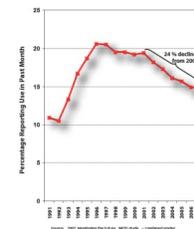


# Be Visible!

# You all need to



# Specialist



# Be Valuable!

## FRAME

**F = Facts**

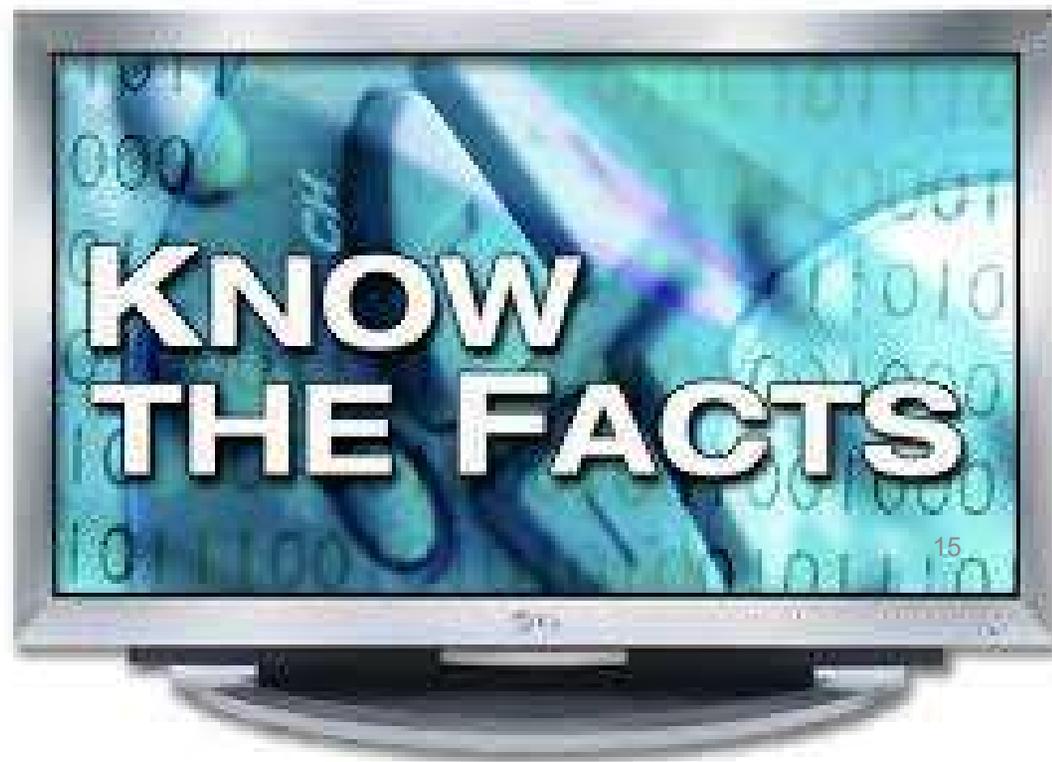
**R = Reduce to 1 page**

**A = Anecdotes/stories**

**M = Map out strategy**

**E = Evaluate Results**

# F= FACTS: The Data



# F= FACTS:

- Data
- Statistics
- Research studies
- Evidence-based strategies and recommendations
- **Cite Your Sources**

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Be Credible – make  
sure any facts or data  
come from reputable  
sources

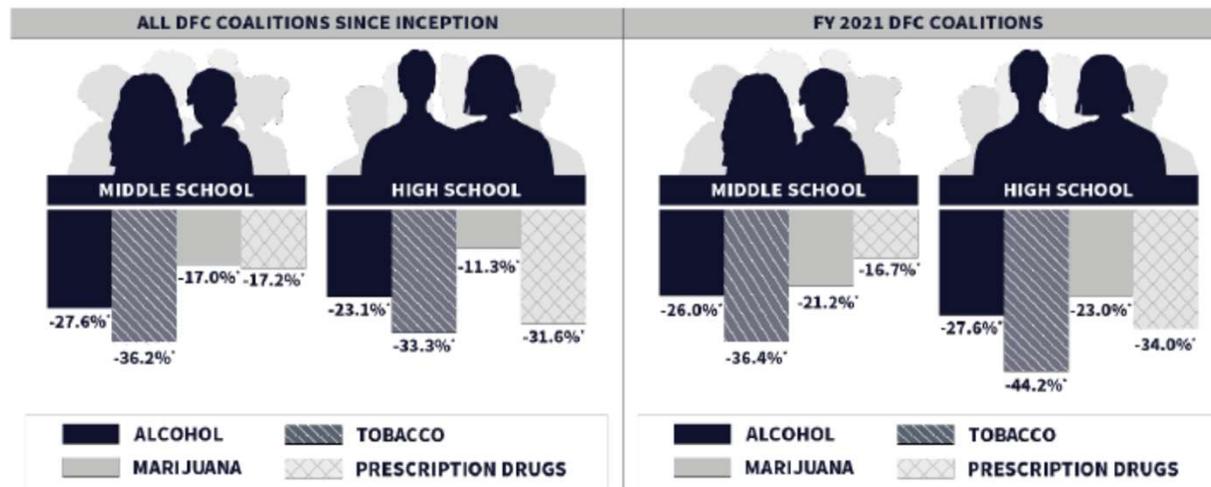


# R= Reduce to 1 Page



# DFC Outcomes

**FIGURE 11. PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN PAST 30-DAY PREVALENCE OF USE**



Source: DFC 2002–2022 Progress Reports, core measures data

Note: \* indicates  $p < .05$



## **3 Questions to Consider for Your One-Pagers**

1. Is the data accurate?
2. Is the data accessible and understandable?
3. Is the data actionable?

# A= Anecdotes

- Always put a face on the data through stories that make it relevant and relatable





# Anecdotes Matter

They make data resonate

They make data human

They make people “get it”

But...they are necessary not sufficient!

# M=MAP OUT YOUR STRATEGY



# **Advocacy in Action: The Power Analysis**

# What Do You Want To Change?

## What Do You Want to Stop from Changing?

- Law
- Regulation
- Policy
- Funding





# Document

- Extent of Problem
- Facts
- Figures
- Anecdotes

**Who Has The Power To Make The Change?**

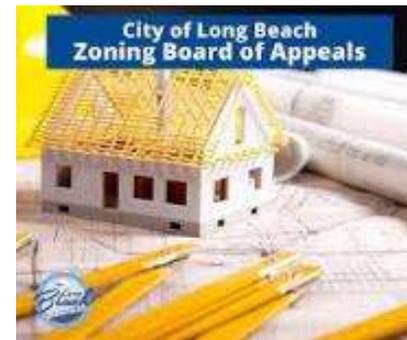
**Stop the Change?**

**Mitigate the Impacts of a Change?**

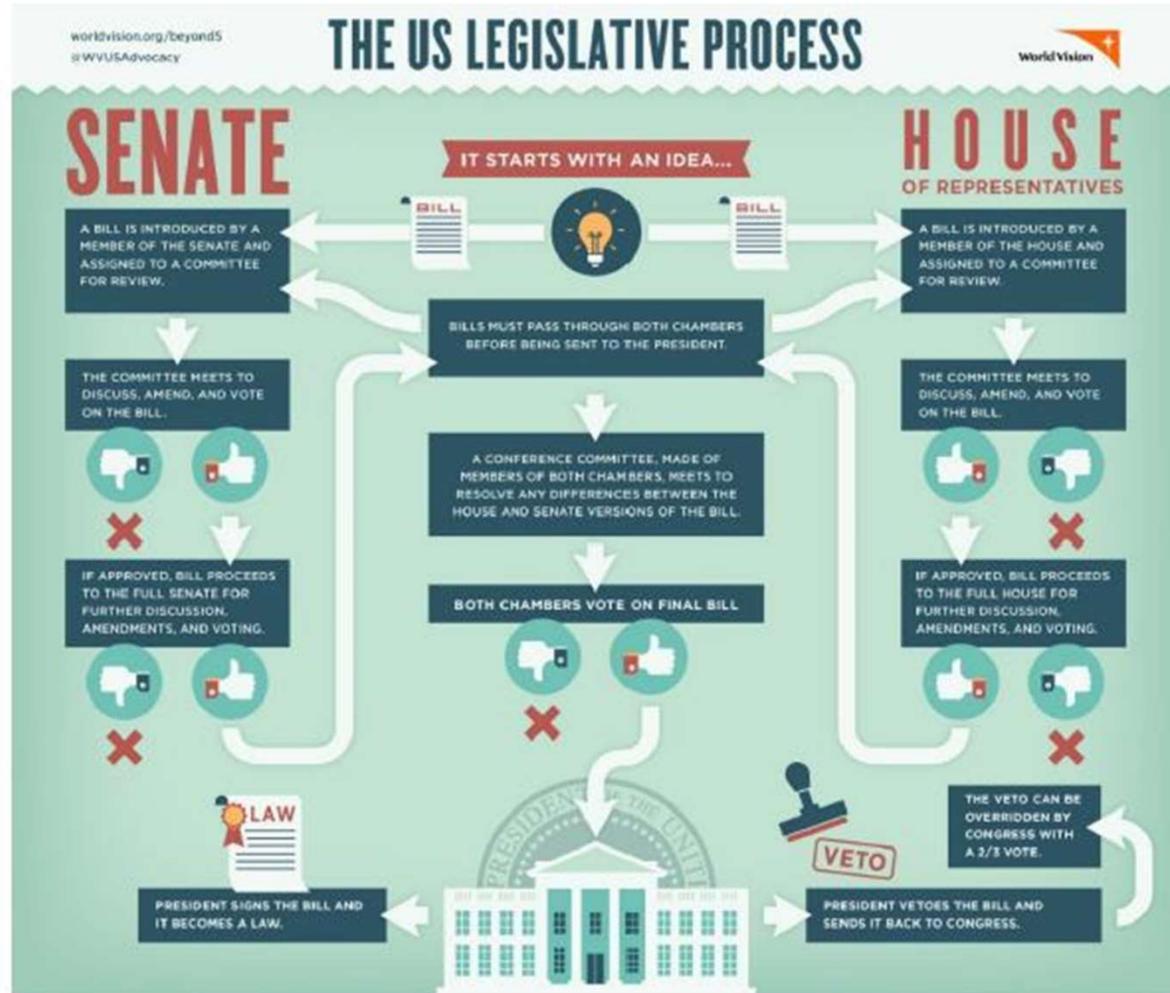
# In What System?



# What People In The System?



# Know And Fully Understand the Process for the System Where You Want to Make the Change





## **Do You Have Important Champions in the System Needed To:**

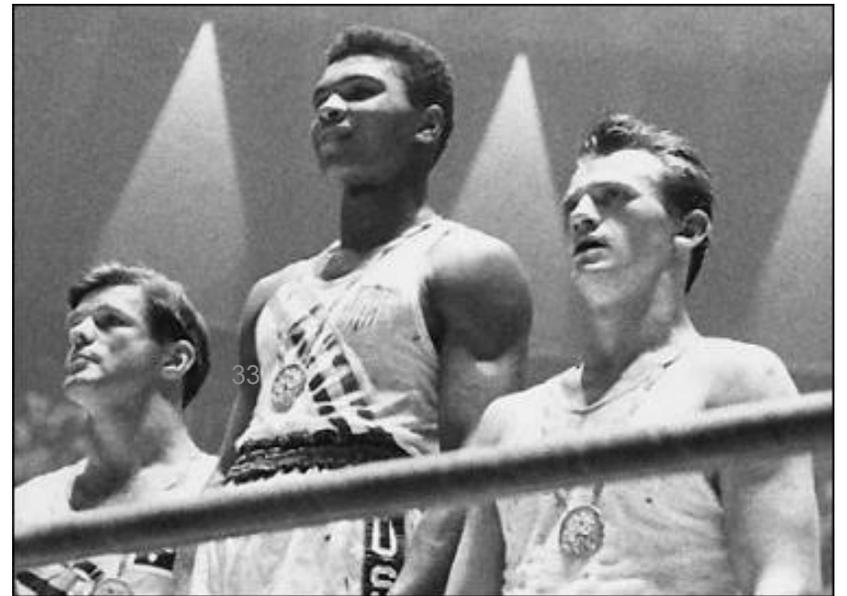
- Make The Change?
- Stop the Change?
- Mitigate the Impacts of the Change Once Its Passed?

**Who Will You Ask  
To Help You In  
Recruiting Your  
Champions?**



Photo Credit: NPR

Cultivate Champions – build and use relationships with legislators to make them into leaders for your cause by inviting them and their staff members to coalition and program meetings.



# Who Are Your Potential Allies?





# Examples

Parents

Parent groups

Faith community

Public health groups

Prevention and treatment groups

Law enforcement

Education groups

Pediatricians/nurses

Consumer safety groups

Youth serving organizations

Coaches

Researchers

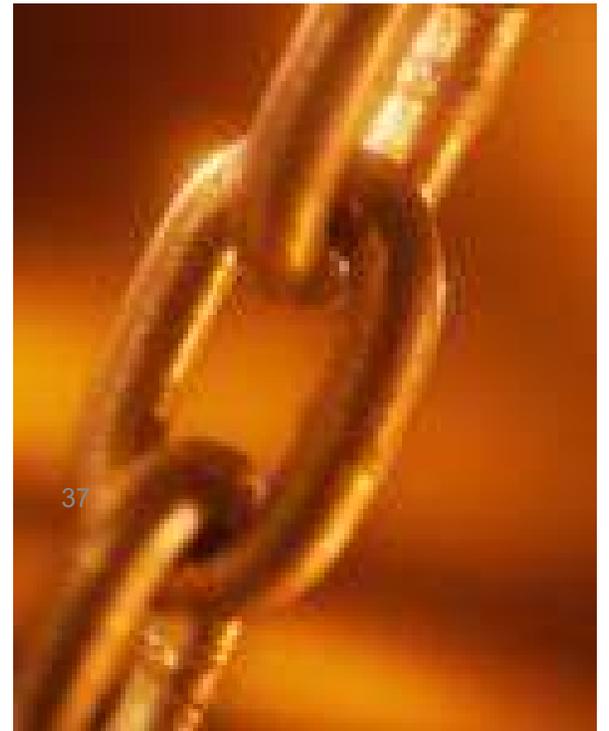
Youth

# What Is Their Shared Interest In This? How Will You Convince Them To Join?



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Be Connected – leverage relationships that others in your community or coalition may have with legislators or their staffs.



Build Coalitions – find non-traditional allies in the community who are not necessarily already members of your coalition and engage them in your advocacy efforts.



**Set up meetings with your potential legislative champions to brief them on the general issue**



# Know Before You Go: Do Your Homework!

- Learn about legislators before you meet with them

- Understand:

Their personal history – e.g., a family member with a substance use disorder, membership in civic organizations, similar hobbies, children on same sports team, etc.)

Their electoral history – are they facing an election soon?

Their committee assignments and their leadership assignments – are they chair or ranking member of a committee?

Their relationship and support for (or opposition to) substance use issues.

Their other areas of interest.

# Who Will You Bring With You to Make Your Case and Why?





## People to Bring

Data/Issue experts

People with anecdotes who can put a face on the data

Important allies

Constituents

# Youth



# Other Tips and Tricks for Successful Legislative Meetings

1. Designate one person to be the primary spokesperson
2. Be brief with introductions
3. Discuss the accomplishments of your coalition/program
4. Ask how you can foster a continuing relationship with the legislator and their staff.
5. Invite youth to participate in the meeting by talking about their experiences.
6. Ask the legislator and their staff the best way to provide follow up materials to them.

Be Clear – refrain from using acronyms or jargon the legislator may not understand.



Be Concise – elected officials and their staff are very busy and meetings are short. Practice what you are going to say and leave time for questions at the end.



**Most Importantly...**

**HAVE A CLEAR ASK**

Be Consistent – stay on message when you advocate.





## Keep the Following in Mind:

- Do the work for them – provide legislators with data, talking points, etc.
- Ensure your written output is clear, concise and understandable – legislators will ignore what they cannot understand.

Be Committed – convey your passion for prevention and follow up with new information when appropriate.

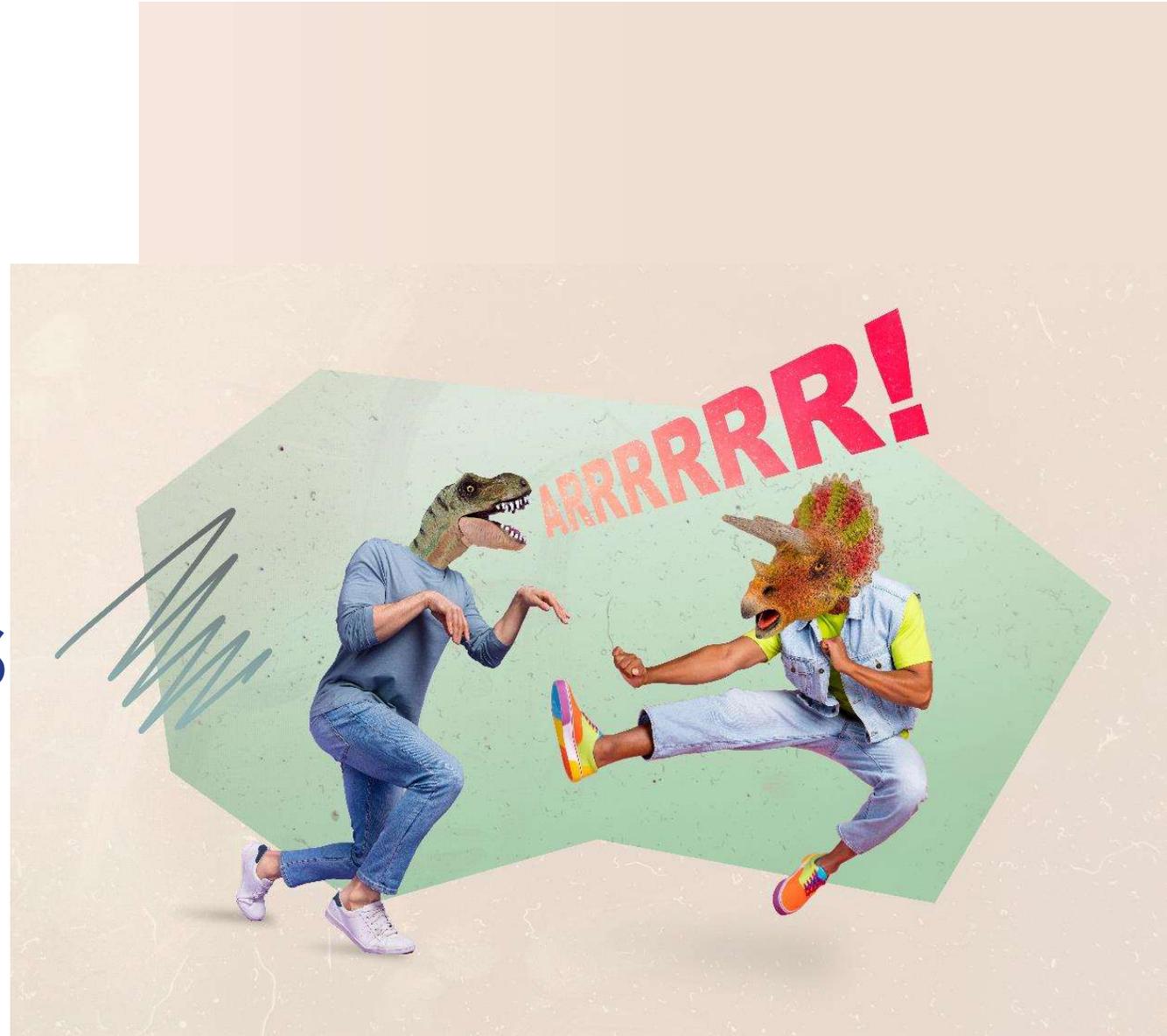


“Success seems to be largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go.”- William Feather

Be Creative – take advantage of all types of communication (emails, letters, phone calls, social media, etc.)



**You Need  
to Know  
Who Your  
Opponents  
Will Be**





# How Will Your Opponents Try To Defeat You?

- Lay out the arguments your opponents will use to try to defeat you.
- How will you counter each of your opponents arguments against your initiative?

# Ensure You Testify At Any Hearings On The Issue



# Use The Media and Social Media To Help You Make Your Case

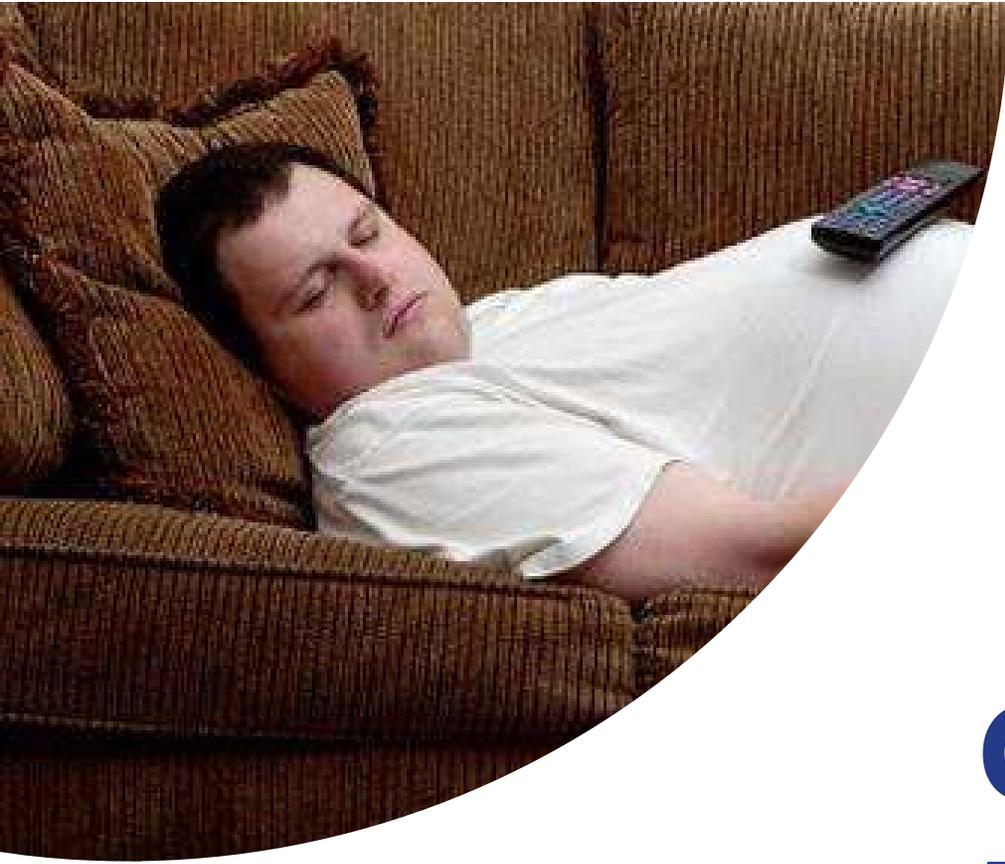


# Can You Win?





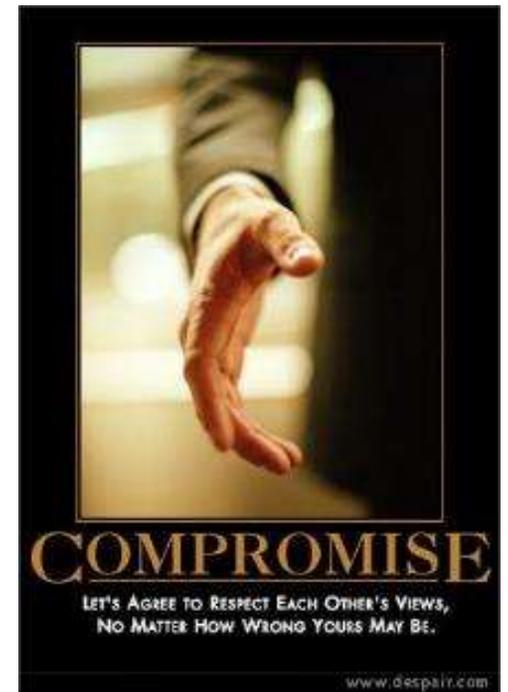
# Can You Afford To Lose?



# Can You Afford Not To Try?

Know When To Compromise – you cannot always get what you want – know what you can settle for.

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# E= Evaluate Results

- Did your meetings go well?
  - Why or why not?
- Did you get the responses you wanted/needed?
  - Why or why not?
- What else do you need to do moving forward?
- Did you achieve your objectives?
  - If so, how? Why? What worked?
  - If not, why not? How close did you come to achieving your goals?
- If you did not, should you try again?
  - If so, when?
  - What would you do differently?
- What else do you need to do moving forward?

Credit Others – give legislators and their staff credit and awards when they help you.



Celebrate Victories –  
thank legislators and  
your allies when you  
achieve any of your  
advocacy goals.

CELEBRATE

THE LITTLE THINGS





# Stay Connected!

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**Thank You!**