Understanding the Issues and Becoming a Change Agent

Presented by: Lisa Elijah & Julie Howell
Welcome & Webinar Process

• Today’s webinar will be recorded and available for viewing on PVA.org
• Closed Captioning is available. Click the CC button in the meeting controls bar at the bottom of your screen to turn it on.
• If you have a question, please type it in the Q&A box. Questions will be answered at the end of the program
Introductions

• Lisa Elijah – Grassroots Advocacy Manager, Air Force Veteran, PVA member

• Julie Howell – Associate Legislative Director, Army Veteran
Series Overview

• The 5 W’s & an H–
  • Fundamentals of Government
  • The Legislative Process
• Understanding the Issues & Becoming a Change Agent
• Who is Advocating & Who With
• The Art of Advocacy
As a reminder: Last Time

- The Legislative Process
  - Origins and Creation of a Bill
  - House & Senate
    - Committees
  - Presidential Action
- Budget
  - Appropriations and Authorizations
Advocacy!

• The pursuit of influencing outcomes, including public-policy and resource allocation decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions that directly affect people’s lives.

• Handing over to Lisa to start our conversation about advocacy
Conceptual Framework of Advocacy

• What is Advocacy?
• What is a Change Maker?
Basic Elements of Advocacy

- Objectives
- Data
- Audiences
- Messages
- Presentation
- Evaluation
- Fundraising
- Coalitions
The Dynamic Advocacy Process

Stage 1: Identifying issues for policy action

Stage 2: Developing solutions

Stage 3: Building political support

Stage 4: Bringing issues, solutions, and political will together for policy action

Stage 5: Evaluating the policy action
Stage 1: Identify Policy Issues for Policy Action

- Agenda setting
  - Unlimited number of problems which need attention, not all get action
  - Advocates decide which to address
    - Stories
    - Surveys
Stage 2: Developing Solutions

- Advocates and key actors propose solutions to problem
  - Some compromises may need to be made
- Create a strategy
  - Build a network/coalition
Developing Your Messages

• What is an effective message? What, why, & how

• 5-Key Elements
  Content or Ideas
  Language
  Source &/or Messenger
  Format
  Time & Place
Three Tips for Message Development & Delivery

• Deliver a consistent message to your audiences through a variety of channels over an extended period of time
• Make sure your message is being delivered by credible advocates that show your authenticity
• Create a message that is easy to understand and will resonate with audiences
Stage 3: Building Political Support

• Political support is the centerpiece of advocacy
  • One of the more difficult pieces of the advocacy fight
  • Lots of research – data and research are critical

• Think of a fantasy football team
  • You pick your champions – who makes the most sense
  • What alliances will have the biggest reward
  • Who would be the best messenger
Stage 4: Connect the Dots

- Policy Issue
- Allies
- Message
- Solution
- Political Support
Stage 5: Evaluating the Policy Action

REMEMBER:
• Adaptability
• Creativity
• Persistence

• Assess the effectiveness of past efforts
• Set new goals based on experience
Levels of Advocacy

• Local, State, National
• Reach out to Chapters – each Chapter has a government relations lead
• Other Chapters may have already had similar fights
• Nothing gets accomplished alone – work with your Chapter
• If it’s a national issue, reach out to PVA National GVR reps or the Chapter, review the policy priorities to see if we're already paying attention to the issues
• Maybe you're already a member of another org (VFW/DAV). If so, maybe there's a chance to reach out to different communities that might be focused on different issues of importance to veterans
Q&A

We are happy to answer any questions you may have.

Again, this was just an overview of certain aspects of the Government
Webinar Code

• For participants viewing the recording that would like credit for session one, please email the code 3A3CA to Lisa Elijah at lisae@pva.org

• Join us next time on Tuesday, July 25th @ 3pm
  • We will cover: Who is Advocating and Who With