

How to impact public policy in 15 easy steps...¹

1. Write your legislation:

- Begin by finding a part of the existing 911 statute, or other related statutes, that might be amended to add specifics of training guidelines or requirements you wish to codify into law.
- Write a summary of the proposed legislation in simple language that is easy to understand and that outlines the particular tenets and specifics of what you want to see in the legislation.
- Prepare supporting statistics, justification, and materials that support your legislative initiatives.
- Determine costs related to any proposed requirements.

2. Find a champion:

- Seek a legislator to introduce your bill that either has public safety experience or a passion for public safety.
- Find a sponsor for your bill that shares your mission.
- Ask to meet with the legislator to strategize the best approach and to outline the need and justification for the bill requirements. Be prepared with background information and the anticipated costs.

3. When the bill is first introduced:

- Create a web site and a unique “landing page” for your advocacy effort.
- Include a summary of the proposed legislation in simplified language that is easy to understand and summarizes the main points of the legislation.
- Develop a Benefits and Consequences page on the web site that talks about the benefits of the legislation and the consequences of inaction.
- Let advocates for the legislation know where they can learn more by providing links to other articles and resources or additional contact information on your own web site.
- Encourage advocates to share you landing page in social media and to support the legislative effort with action.
- Remember that legislative aides are almost as good as visiting directly with the legislator.

4. When the bill is referred to a legislative committee:

- Update your landing page with the committee members' contact information.
- Create a “call to action” on the page asking those supporting the legislation to call, email or write their respective representatives.

¹ Adapted from Erica Hatch, www.volatility.com; September 5, 2014.

- Give your advocates guidelines, but enable them to personalize their own messages (this gets the attention of lawmakers over repetitive form letters). Encourage local stories, real life examples, and use cases.

5. When your bill is being considered by the entire committee or referred to a subcommittee:

- Create a public or private online forum for your advocates to provide stories, experiences, advocacy ideas for others.
- Provide talking points for advocates on what they should say to legislators either in person or in written form.
- Connect advocates with their correct legislators or other advocates for support.

6. When your bill is in subcommittee review:

- Provide legislative committee members or their aides with expert testimonies and other useful information including background, one-pager summation, benefits and consequences, use cases, etc.
- Create a newsletter or blog that keeps advocates and supporters updated.
- Create “action alerts” to keep your advocates and supporters informed of late-breaking changes proposed to the legislation.

7. When your bill goes to “markup”:

- Continue to contact legislators through social media, email and phone calls, with the message: *“This is what your voters want. This is how they want it to read. This is what they want it to do.”*
- Make sure you email your advocates to explain why the bill is in markup and how they can help push it through.
- Use social media to show advocates and supporters why it is important to stay engaged with the process and to continue to contact their legislators.

8. When there is committee action to report your bill:

- Gather comments directly from your supporters.
- Meet with the legislative committee to show them what your members have said and explain their position.
- Offer testimony and expert authentication of the need.
- Provide statistical or anecdotal information and reports as needed.

9. During preparation for written report on the bill:

- Continue contacting legislators through email, social media, phone calls, etc.

A lot of advocacy efforts wait until this point to start their work. But the most successful legislative campaigns will have prepared for this stage well in advance and will have laid the groundwork in Steps 1-7. Make sure you're one of them!

10. When they are scheduling floor action:

- Let advocates and supporters know when a vote on the bill will likely happen to ensure they are still engaged with their legislative representatives.
- Keep the web site updated; use your blog or email alerts as needed.

11. During the debate:

- Back up your position with legislators using detailed reports that outline your advocates' position and any use cases or hometown examples.

12. During the bill vote:

- Provide your advocates and supporters the results of how their legislators voted.
- Show advocates and supporters what happened, why it happened, and how your organized efforts had an impact.
- Ask your advocates and supporters to contact their legislators and thank them for their support if appropriate.

13. If your bill is referred to another chamber of the legislature:

- Use social media or other notification tools to motivate your advocates and supporters to stay active and engaged.
- Continually inform advocates and supporters of any changes or updates to the bill.

14. If there is conference committee action:

- Guide your advocates and supporters to say what you need them to say, and give them the tools they need to take action.

15. Get started:

- Advocacy starts with the first step.....get started!