


Raise Your Voice: Effective Strategies to Advocate for Policy Change

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Coalition for a Strong Nebraska



Agenda

- Introductions
 - Spell your name
- Coalition for a Strong Nebraska
 - How a Bill Becomes a Law
- Nonprofits CAN Lobby
- Different Ways to Lobby
- How to Frame Your Lobbying Message
- Lobbying Practice
- Questions & Answers



100 Nebraska Nonprofits focused on poverty alleviation through public policy engagement.





CSN Policy Focus

- Budget/Revenue/Taxes
- Civic Engagement
- Criminal Justice Reform
- Economic Security
- Food Security
- Education
- Healthcare
- Housing
- Immigration
- Trauma Justice





How We Do It!

- Member meetings
- Onsite & open trainings
 - For management & board
 - For clients & community
- Mentorship program
- Weekly policy update eNews
- Weekly policy update calls
- Bill tracking document
- Weekly Legislative blog



How Does a Bill Become Law in the Unicameral?




Nonprofits CAN Lobby




Why Focus on Nonprofit Sector?

- Over 12,000 Nonprofits (501c3's) in Nebraska
- Third largest industry with 1 in 11 NE workers employed by a nonprofit
- Over \$500 Million in tax revenue


“Each Nebraskan is touched every day by a Nonprofit, whether they know it or not.”

Ann Hindrey,
Chief Executive Officer,
Nonprofit Association of the Midlands



Nonprofit Voice in Policy Engagement

What	Definition
Education	Informing others about an issue/problem - usually fair and balanced.
Advocacy	Informing others about your opinion on an issue that affects your clients or community - usually with an opinion, can be about public policy, but not about a specific piece of legislation.
Lobbying	Informing elected officials, or the public, what your opinion is on a specific piece of legislation or ballot initiative.



Why Lobby: What is your vision?



Why Don't Nonprofits Lobby?

1. Confusion about laws regarding nonprofit's ability to lobby
2. Fear of public/donor reaction, not able to see connection to mission
3. Limited time and financial resources, including lack of staff capacity/skills/training



Nonprofits Can Lobby!



In 1934, Congress passed a law that went into the IRS code:

Non-profits can lobby as long as it's an *insubstantial* part of what they do.



Contacting legislators to *propose, support, or oppose* legislation or the government's budget process.

Urging the public to contact legislators to *propose, support, or oppose* legislation or the government's budget process.

Advocating the adoption or rejection of legislation.

WHAT IS LOBBYING UNDER THE INSUBSTANTIAL PART TEST?



Nonprofits Can Lobby & Know Their Limits!







In 1976, Congress addressed the vague statement about "insubstantial."

They gave non-profits a **specific way to measure** their lobbying efforts - electing the 501h!


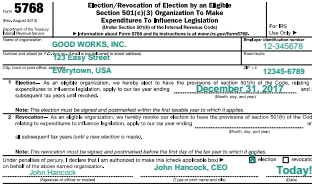


501h Lobbying Definitions

<p>DIRECT</p> <p>Communication Legislator</p> <p>Expresses a view about specific legislation</p>	
<p>GRASSROOTS</p> <p>Communication General public</p> <p>Expresses a view about specific legislation</p> <p>Call to action</p>	 



Fill Out the Form!

5768 Election/Revocation of Election by an Eligible Section 501(c)(3) Organization to Make Expenditures to Influence Legislation

Form 5768-12-2017

For the calendar year ending on 12/31/2017

Name and address of the organization: **GOOD WORKS, INC.**
133 East 58th St
Evanston, USA


Employer identification number: 12-3456789

Effective date: 12/31/2017

December 31, 2017

John Hancock, CEO

Today!



Best Practices

- File the 501h
- Form a Board Policy Committee
 - Create internal policies
 - Oversee policy advocacy
- Inform accountants, bookkeepers, accountants



“Ultimately, all high-impact organizations bridge the divide between service and advocacy. They become good at both. And the more they serve and advocate, the more they achieve impact.”

McLeod, H., "Creating High-Impact Nonprofits," Stanford Social Innovation Review, Fall 2007





For free coaching about laws impacting nonprofit advocacy:
 advocacy@afj.org
 866.675.6229

For free tools, fact sheets, and publications
 www.bolderadvocacy.org



Training on Lobbying Rules



www.strongnebraska.org



Different Ways to Lobby



Direct v. Grassroots Lobbying

Direct Lobbying	Grassroots Lobbying
Communication	Communication
Elected Officials	General Public
Expresses a view about specific legislation	Expresses a view about specific legislation with CALL to ACTION



Lobby by Email/Phone

- Email
 - Who are you?
 - Bill number, position, ask
- Phone
 - Who should you talk to?
 - Identify yourself
 - Bill number, position, ask
 - Leave a message



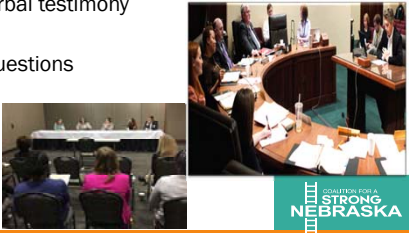
In Person Lobbying

- Expect a 15-minute meeting
- Timing is everything
- Use talking points
- Share the impact of the bill
- Make an ask



Committee Testimony

- Comments – official hearing record
- Provide written or verbal testimony
 - Testifier Sheet
- Prepare to answer questions
- Practice, practice!!!



How to Frame Your Lobbying Message




Everyone Can Share Their Expertise/Interest

- Constituent
- Nebraskan
- Work experience
- Your lived experience



Story Frames


- Frame in which you come to the idea
- Build a new frame for your issue



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Fill the Frame

- Formula of three




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Common Value

- Shared belief
- An idea that most people can nod their head to in support

Circle of Trust



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Problem



- Share your knowledge about the problem
- Single statistic within the context of personal story that shows the shared value is not being upheld



Solution



- What can be done to change the situation?
 - How will this bill/policy solve the problem?



Lobbying Practice

- Team Up with a Partner
- Outline your thoughts
 - Use the form
- Practice with Partner
 - Phone call
 - Personal lobby visit
 - Committee testimony



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Questions?

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