Psychology of Issues Advocacy: Maximizing Your Impact with Lawmakers

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Overview of APA Public Interest Issues

1. Violence Prevention: The “Background Checks Act of 2019” (H.R. 8)
   Require federal background checks on all gun sales, including gun shows and private transactions (excludes transfers between family members or temporary use of a gun for hunting)

2. Immigration
   Supported the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minor (DREAM) Act in the last Congress and used psychological research to advocate keeping families together

3. Opioids: The SUPPORT Act
   [“Substance Use-disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment for Patients and Communities Act” (P.L. 115-27 )]: Worked across GROs last year to support provisions in the law such as Medicare coverage of Medication Assisted Treatment, Loan Repayment, protections for pregnant and postpartum women, and a demonstration project on testing incentive payments to psychologists and other mental health providers for use of Electronic Health Records
APA Public Interest Issues, continued

4. Socioeconomic Status/Children, Youth and Families: The “Child Care for Working Families Act” (H.R. 1364/S.) Enables more families to access high quality care and early learning opportunities for their children

5. Women’s Issues and Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: Supported access to reproductive healthcare in the ACA, the Violence Against Women’s Act, addressing Campus Sexual Assaults, the Equality Act, and the Every Child Deserves a Family Act
“Congress places a high value on groups and citizens who have built relationships with the legislator and staff.”* In-person meetings are the best way to build your relationship with the office.

But what does developing a relationship mean, and how do I do that?

Meeting vs. Relationship

Group 1: Meeting only

Group 2: Relationship

= in person meeting

= personalized email or phone call
Building Relationships: The Rule of 3, or “3 Touches”

1. First meeting with an office (1\textsuperscript{st} touch):
   - Introduce yourself
   - Describe the issue you’d like to discuss (maybe through a story)
   - Share information (data, research)
   - Create a reason to maintain contact (getting business card)
   - Follow-up (within a week or 2)

2. After a period of time (initiate contact once again to provide info – 2\textsuperscript{nd} touch)

3. During your third contact/touch, make your request
My Experience, Being on the Receiving End of Lobbying Visits

__ follow-up emails
__ contacts the next month
__ contacts after three months
__ in-district visits
__ site visits