Advocacy 101: Prepping for Local and National Visits

Adapted and updated from a presentation by EnglishUSA’s former educational consultants Washington Partners, LLC as well as NAFSA & TESOL Advocacy Day resources.

Prepared and revised July 2018
What is Advocacy?

• Organized activism in support of an idea or cause
• Consists of individual *constituents* contacting their elected officials about issues that are important to them
• Involves establishing *on-going relationships* that can be leveraged to educate and influence policy makers
Why advocate?

• Educate Member of Congress/Staff about IEPs
• Build a relationship with YOUR Member of Congress
Why Advocate?

Lawmakers are guided by their belief and values system

Senate: deliberative, thoughtful check on the House -- more easily swayed by passions of the public

Unbiased, independent research to justify policies/provide political cover

“Politics” and listening to constituents

EnglishUSA: Previous Lobbying Efforts

EnglishUSA (then AAIEP) was instrumental in passing the Accreditation Bill in 2011:

- Use of a lobbyist
- More regulation for IEPs = evening the playing field internationally, and regulate ourselves before anyone else does it
- IEP accreditation mandate: all IEPs that accept students on F-1 student visas must be accredited.
- Not an immigration issue!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advocate FOR</th>
<th>Advocate TO</th>
<th>Advocate AS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Our students</td>
<td>• Federal, state &amp; local agencies and legislators</td>
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<td>• Our programs</td>
<td>• Campus governmental liaison</td>
<td>• A voter aka constituent</td>
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<td>• International education</td>
<td>• Institutional leadership</td>
<td>• A professional with expertise</td>
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<td>• Exchange programs</td>
<td></td>
<td>• A representative of an institution or organization</td>
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<td>• Easier entry into the USA for legitimate applicants</td>
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<td>• A member of EnglishUSA</td>
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Reminder: Your role and your institution

Anyone can advocate as a private citizen, but it is always important to find out what your organization’s policies are before you start advocating.

“We make it a point to advise our faculty/staff to follow the direction of our legal office in only engaging in political activities on their own personal time and without use of university computer, etc.”

- Legislative Liaison
  Georgia State University
Climate in Washington

• Highly-partisan Congress characterized by unprecedented dysfunction

• Administration’s priorities are on healthcare, budget, tax reform, infrastructure, building up defense spending

• IEP-related issues include impact of the travel ban, immigration reform, State Department funding
Who’s in Charge in the 115th Congress?

• Senate
  • 51 Republicans
  • 47 Democrats
  • 2 Independents

• House
  • 236 Republicans
  • 193 Democrats
  • 6 vacancies
Congressional Leadership

U.S. House Leadership:
- Speaker of the House: Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI)
- Minority Leader: Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)

U.S. Senate Leadership:
- Majority leader: Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY)
- Senate Minority Leader: Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY)
Senate Committee Leadership

U.S. Senate Judiciary
• Chair: Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA)
• Ranking: Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)

U.S. Senate HELP (Health, Education, Labor, Pension):
• Chair: Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN)
• Ranking member: Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA)
House Committee Leadership

U.S. House Judiciary

- Chair: Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-VA)
- Ranking: Rep. John Conyers (D-MI)

U.S. House Education & Workforce:

- Chair: Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC)
- Ranking member: Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA)
Before the Visit
Step #1: Find and Research “Your People”

1. Find out who your representatives are and which committees they serve on: 
   https://www.connectingourworld.org/lookup

2. Go to their websites (directed from site above)
   - House: lastname.house.gov
   - Senate: lastname.senate.gov

3. Follow them on Twitter

4. Put their DC and district office phone numbers in your phone

5. Capital Switchboard: 202-224-3121

6. Sign up for Action Alerts with Connecting Our World
Many offices have schedulers who will arrange the meetings for you with either your MOC (rare, but not impossible) or a legislative assistant or director.

Resource to find your MOCs: https://cqrcengage.com/fcnl/stafflookup

These issues are cumulative and send a XXXX negative message to potential student visitors.
Before the Visit

Step #2: Schedule an appointment

• Use the information from the previous slide to contact the scheduler in your MOC’s office

• Write an email to request a meeting

Dear XXXXXX

I hope Senator XXX and the entire staff are doing well this summer. I’m writing to request an appointment with XXXXXXX or a staff member to discuss the status for the support of international students and English language learners in the United States, as well as its economic impact on the State of XXXXXX. In particular, we’d like to share information about YYYYY.

Three of us from XXXX will be coming together to discuss relevant issues. We have time in the later morning on XXXXX or early afternoon YYYY.

Thank you in advance for assisting us with the appointment!
Before the Visit
Step #3: Do your homework and find out...

- Member’s party affiliation, committee assignments, bio and interests
- Current context/climate for your issue
- Who are you meeting with?
- Location of meetings
- Background on accreditation bill
Before the Visit
Step Three: Know Your Numbers

- Provide concrete numbers
- Do a rough estimate of the IEPs in your state and/or district and calculate the economic impact.
- Plan an outline of what you will discuss and who will say what
- Prepare a one-pager with numbers
For more than 30 years, EnglishUSA, the American Association of Intensive English Programs, has been serving university/college and independent programs that provide English as a second language for prospective undergraduate and graduate students, business people, and others interested in learning more about the U.S. culture.

Economic Impact of English Language Programs in the U.S.

- In addition to myriad foreign policy and academic contributions international students make to American communities, the Association of International Educators (NAFSA) latest analysis finds that international students studying in Georgia U.S. colleges and universities contributed more than $683 million dollars and supported more than 9,400 jobs. Congressional District 05 benefits from $352 million of this state total.
- In Georgia, there are eight college and university language programs who are members of EnglishUSA, along with three proprietary programs. The majority of these students continue in degree programs and thus contribute even further to the Georgia economy for many years.
- Language students participate in EnglishUSA programs through personal funds or privately funded scholarship at no cost to Georgia taxpayers.

National Security

Language programs support U.S. national security and foreign policy interests:

- In meetings with embassies as well as with students, universities and organizations here and overseas, language program administrators engage in partnerships and collaboration with countries key to U.S. foreign policy interests.
- U.S. leadership and interests around the world are advanced when students return back to their countries with positive experiences.
- Current student visa guidelines (non-immigrant student visas) efficiently determine and screen bona fide language and degree students; travel bans threaten the view that others have of the U.S. and will impact international student enrollment.

Mutual Understanding

Language programs are usually the first step and first introduction to the U.S. for students who end up spending many years in the state.

- Students experience quality language programs provided in Georgia and while improving language skills, they also foster relationships with Americans and other English speaking Georgia citizens in multiple contexts, gaining more positive view of the U.S. Georgia and the South.
- Generations of foreign policy leaders have viewed international students as one of America’s greatest foreign policy assets.
- EnglishUSA (then AAIIP) was instrumental in passing the Accreditation Bill in 2011, required all language programs be accredited and opening up legitimate access to educational and cultural experiences for international students.

Insert economic information from your state

Insert EnglishUSA information

Tailor and sequence information based on what you know about your Members of Congress (i.e. Economic impact and National Security ‘fronted’).
At the visit: An outline

• Introduce yourself and your colleagues
• Give them background on what you do and what you are here
• Provide background context and data
• Share stories about impact students have had on your community
• Be ready with a concrete “ask”
• Thank them for their time
• Leave behind detailed information and your business card
At the visit: A few pointers

- Be on time (security lines are sometimes long!)
- Build a connection
- Stay on message
- Be clear and concise
- Share specific stories
- Make a clear, actionable request
- Be positive
- Leave time for questions
Don’t be surprised if...

- The staff are very young
- The meeting takes place in the hall
- The staffer is not familiar with IEPs
- You can’t answer one of their questions
- Your staffer doesn’t commit immediately
After the visit: Follow Up

- Always leave something behind
- Invite them to your program to visit or bring students along
- Follow up with thank you email and any information on unanswered questions
- Invite elected officials and the media to local events, panel discussions
- Recognize an elected official with an award
Finally....

• Review your Members’ interests and affiliations prior to going
• Stay on message and be precise
• Keep it positive
• Illustrate the need and impact of international students in your community (with numbers)
• Keep building the relationship after the meeting
• Have fun!
Call to Action for EnglishUSA Members

• Keep Members’ phone numbers in phone
• Sign up for newsletters
• Attend town hall meetings
• Research what committees are working on
• Schedule an in-district meeting with colleagues in your region
• Remember: Advocacy is a marathon, not a sprint!
## Advocacy Resources

The resources provided below can assist our membership with advocacy efforts at the national and local levels.

### Statements from EnglishUSA
- TESOL, EnglishUSA, and UCEP Joint Statement on Social Media Vetting of International Students (May 29, 2017)
- TESOL and UCEP on Possible Limitations on US Student Visas from China (March 21, 2018)

### Resources to Contact Members of Congress (MOC) and/or Set Up Visits
- Congressional Staff Lookup: Find the scheduler for your MOCs
- Congress.gov
- Tracking the United States Congress
- NAFSA/Connecting our World Advocacy Toolkit
- NAFSA Issue Net
- Connecting our World

### Advocacy Resources from Relevant Organizations
- NAFSA/Connecting our World Advocacy Toolkit
- NAFSA Issue Net
- Connecting our World
- NAFSA International Student Economic Value Tool
- TESOL Advocacy Resources
- Alliance for International Exchange (must be a member to access some resources)
- AEA Advocacy Resources
- NACAC Advocacy Resources (includes both state and federal legislative issues)
- DHS Press Releases

### Advocacy How-To Guides
- Indivisible Guide (grassroots advocacy advice)
- CountMe
- Open States: Discover Politics in Your States

### Sample Documents
- One pager: Sample document with state data (IA) from NAFSA Economic Tool
- One pager: Sample document with state data (GA) from NAFSA Economic Tool