School Nutrition Association of WI

Making the right food choices, together

Grassroots Advocacy 101:
Citizen lobbying & impacting the legislative process
Legislative 101
An overview of the WI Legislature

- Two Houses of the Legislature
  - State Assembly
  - State Senate

- 99 members of the Assembly
  - 50,000 citizens per Assembly District

- 33 members of the Senate
  - 150,000 citizens per Senate District
  - 3 Assembly Districts per Senate District
SNA-WI Advocacy: A team effort

School Nutrition Association of WI

Professional Lobbyist

Grassroots Advocacy
SNA-WI volunteers
What is grassroots advocacy?

Grassroots advocacy is the act of many individuals working as a cohesive group communicating the SAME message to government officials.

- Your effort alone does not equal success.
- Your efforts must be equaled by other SNA-WI members across a large number of legislative districts.
- Your message must be consistent with other SNA-WI members.
Why does grassroots advocacy work?

Legislators listen to their constituents and want to please you, because:

- You’re from their district.
- You have a vote and can help re-elect them.
- You’re an influential, active member of your community.
Why does grassroots advocacy work?

Ingredients for success:

- Teamwork
- Effective, consistent communication
- Staying on message
Grassroots Advocacy: Contacting your legislator

Communication methods

- Personal Visits
- Personal Letters
- Phone Calls
- E-Mails
Grassroots Advocacy: Contacting your legislator

Citizen lobbying DO’s and DON’T’s:

**DO**

- Identify yourself as a constituent
- State your support or opposition by bill # or issue
- Use personal stories
- Stay on message
- Ask for their position and assistance
- Keep it brief
- Be courteous
Grassroots Advocacy:  
Contacting your legislator

Citizen lobbying DOs and DON’Ts:

DON’T

- Lie, exaggerate or bluff
- Be rude, demanding or threatening
- Discuss unrelated issues
- Copy a sample letter
- Discount staff
- Stray of message
- Misrepresent yourself
Grassroots Advocacy: Contacting your legislator

When communicating with your legislator, make the sale!

- **HOOK**: Tell your legislator who you are. Most importantly, tell them you’re a constituent.

- **LINE**: Tell your legislator a personal story about your issue and present them with a strong argument.

- **SINKER**: Make a request. Ask your legislator to make a commitment to your issue.
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