The Value of Advocacy
Civics 101

When do you advocate?

To whom do you advocate?

Why do you advocate?
"We in America do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate."

-- Thomas Jefferson
Internet and Government

- 46% of American adults visited a government Web site
  - Government Web sites were more popular than tourism sites and online shopping
  - Almost HALF of all Americans contacted their U.S. Senator or Representative in the last five years
- 37% used the Internet for campaign activities
  - Research, volunteer, contribute
- 25% researched public policy issues online

(Source: Pew Internet and American Life Project)
Constituent Visits: 99%
Individualized Letters: 96%
Rep. for Constituents: 96%
Individualized E-mail: 94%
Lobbyist Visit: 93%
Individualized Faxes: 91%
Phone Calls: 88%
Form Letters: 65%
Form E-mail: 63%
Form Faxes: 57%

A lot of Influence
Some Influence
Craft an effective message

• Concise
• Has a clear ask
• Is professional
• Well-targeted
• Email is preferred
  – Easiest method for staffers
  – Saves them time and money
**DO**

- Send personalized messages that tells how a bill affects you
- Send thank-you messages to Members who support your issues
DO NOT

• Send your messages too early or too late
• Send general messages that aren’t about a specific bill or issue
• Just send repetitive and impersonal form messages
• Send the same message over and over
• Convey your position on multiple issues in a single letter
Identify yourself

• It is considered best practice for an organization to identify itself in form letters.
• Organization Signature (OrgSig) allows our clients to identify their association in the emails their members send to your office.
• Benefits:
  – Able to tag citizens as members of a group
  – Able to send follow up on issues of interest
  – Able to contact the organization
“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

-- Margaret Mead
Council for Exceptional Children