

AALL Day on the Hill

Tips and Techniques for Effective
Advocacy





The DC Context

- Number of bills introduced in a Congressional session
- Percentage of bills that pass
- Percentage of bills that pass that relate to the renaming of post offices and federal buildings
- Average time for a meeting with an elected official

But wait! Am I allowed to lobby?



Key: As a citizen, ALWAYS yes. But don't use your library's letterhead without permission!

Three Keys to Successful Advocacy

You must know:

- What you want
- Who you're talking to
- How to talk to them

Step One: Know What You Want

- See Issue Briefs, which include:
 - Access to CRS reports
 - Authentication and e-Life Cycle Management
 - Funding for the Law Library of Congress
 - Public access to court electronic systems (PACER)
 - USA PATRIOT Act

Key: What are our ASKS? Don't accept the "we love law libraries" response.



Step 2: Apply What You Know About Your Audience – Homework Review!



- ☑ Relevance: Why Are You Relevant?
- ☑ What did you learn about their interests and legislation they've introduced?
- ☑ What positions do your legislators hold?
- ☑ What are their politics?
- ☑ Did you learn any interesting biographical information?

Tips on Dealing With Staff



- Remember, your issue is one of many
- What are staff looking for?
- Staff contact has advantages over member contact
- What to say when they ask a question you don't know the answer to
- Managing “challenging” staff
- Expect and appreciate youth

Step 3: Know How to Ask – Overview Tips

- Be flexible: Anything can happen in a Congressional meeting
- Be prepared: You may have only five minutes
- Remember what influences the legislator and staff – your message starts with your audience
- How to manage opposition / lack of interest

How Should You Ask? Follow the SPIT Rule

- Specific: What is your specific goal in the meeting?
- Personal: How does this issue impact your library and your users? How does it impact your ability to do your job?
- Informative: What arguments can you bring to bear on the issue?
- Trustworthy: How can you demonstrate to the staff they can rely on you?
- ... and be brief!

Coffee Break

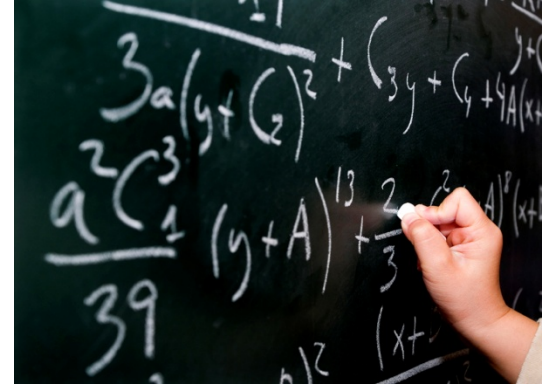


Applying Our Specific Techniques to the AALL Messages

A collaborative look at
the message formula



The Message Formula



- Hello, my name is [] and I'm from [] (establishes relevancy)
- I am here to talk to you about [policy / relationship ask]
- Knowing of your interest in [info about your audience] we think you'll be interested as well
- This is important to the people I represent because [personal story]
- That's why our students / faculty / users really hope you'll [ask]
- I'd like to follow-up by [follow-up ideas]
- Can I get contact information for all the appropriate people in your office?

Applying the Message Formula: Sample Authentication Message

As you know, government/legal information from the federal government is a top priority for the people of our state/district (maybe give an example of why...). It is great progress that so much information is now available in electronic format (including your own web site and that of the _____ committee).

But, as legal information professionals, we and our association have some real concerns. We believe the federal government has an obligation to make sure that official online information resources, especially primary legal sources, are freely available to the public, are authentic, and are preserved permanently, just as print sources have been. We are pleased that the Government Printing Office has made some good progress in this direction, but there is still a long way to go.

States such as ours are looking to the federal government for a model of how to do this—make sure that online versions are preserved and are not altered or corrupted from original official versions—by using digital signatures, encryption, and other technology. Those methods have already been used by the GPO to produce authenticated online versions of the public laws of the 110th and 111th Congress, and now Congressional bills beginning with the 111th Congress.

But that is just the beginning and much more needs to be done to develop a solution at the federal level. Will you help us in this important effort?

Developing a PACER Message

- Legislation: None.
- Committees: Senate HSGAC; Senate Rules and Administration Committee; Senate Judiciary Committee; Senate Appropriations Committee

Key message:

- Thank Chairman Joseph Lieberman (ID-CT) for his commitment to ensuring no-fee public access to PACER.
- Ask Judiciary and Appropriations Committee members to support no-fee access to PACER.
- Urge Rules Committee members to put pressure on the AO to resume the PACER pilot project.

Developing a CRS Reports Message

- Legislation: S. Res. 118
- Committee: Senate Rules and Administration Committee

Key message:

- We believe the public has the right to access these valuable, taxpayer-funded reports.
- Rules Committee Chairman Schumer (D-NY) has not take any action to consider S. Res. 118. Ask your senator to urge Chairman Schumer to take up the resolution in the Committee.

It's Practice Time: Now YOU can get started applying the techniques



The Top Five List: What Staff & Elected Officials Hate to Hear

5. Here's some reading material for you – our 300 page annual report
4. How much of a campaign contribution did your boss get to vote against (or for) this bill?
3. What do you mean we have to stand in the hall?
2. What you're telling me can't be right. I heard Jon Stewart from the Daily Show say otherwise.
1. But I thought my appointment was with the Senator!

The One Little Thing That Makes ALL the Difference



Go Forth and Advocate!

Take the Advocacy
Pledge



Small Group Discussion: Coordinating Your Message for Maximum Impact

- Key: Coordination = Effectiveness. Don't let chaos rule!
- Not everyone should speak in every meeting:
 - Does anyone have a personal relationship?
 - Who has the best story on which issue?
 - Who feels most comfortable speaking?
- Remember the five minute rule!

Contact Information

Stephanie Vance

Advocacy Associates

1640 19th St., NW

Second Floor

Washington, DC 20009

(202) 234-1353

www.advocacyassociates.com

info@advocacyassociates.com

