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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



Goals for Today

- The importance of Elections
- Overview of the legislative process in Arizona
- How to follow what's happening at the Legislature
- Advocacy Skills

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What's the Best Way to Be Heard???



Know Who is Running & Vote

- Register to vote and be an informed voter
- Know your candidates and what they stand for – build a relationship
 - Check their history and websites
 - Meet them – district meetings, forums, debates, door-to-door
 - Introduce yourself, build a relationship
 - Invite them to visit your agency and meet staff and clients
- Support those you like
 - Donate
 - Work for their campaign
- VOTE!!!



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Important Election Facts

<http://www.azsos.gov/elections/voting-election>



- 2017 Elections – Mostly City Councils (Phoenix, Prescott, Yuma, Surprise)
- 2018 Elections - Nov. 6, 2018 - All state legislators, U.S. Congressional Representatives, one U.S. Senate seat, County Supervisors, etc. Referendums & Initiatives
- **Register to vote** – To register, find your County Elections Department. Dates vary.
- Can select to vote by mail. There will be deadlines established to request mail-in ballots for each election or you can also select to be on the Permanent Early Voting List (PEVL).

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Don't Skip the Primary Election

- Because most legislative districts have a majority party registration, the winners of the General Election are actually determined by the Primary results.
- For **state primary** elections, voters registered as Independents can and should vote. You can select in which party you want to vote.
- But -- for **Presidential primaries**, only voters registered with a participating political party may vote.
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Three Branches of Government



Executive branch – Governor oversees Department of Child Safety
Judicial branch – Juvenile Court, Appeals Courts, Supreme Court
Legislative branch (House of Representatives & Senate) – State laws and State budget

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Considerations for Legislative Advocacy



- Policies/Bills – Changes proposed to state laws
- Money/Budget – Resources needed to protect children and families
- Politics & Political Will – The Governor, the Legislature, other elected officials, agency administrators and the public
- ***If there's political will, there's a way***

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Ideas for Legislation



- The results of interim committees
- Court decisions
- State agencies of both the executive and judicial branch
- Political subdivisions
- Individual constituents
- Business and special interest groups

The Basic Facts

- Arizona Regular Legislative Session begins second Monday in January 8, 2018
- Ends anywhere from April – June
- Primary Responsibility is passing the state budget for the next fiscal year (July – June)
- Generally, over 1200 bills introduced; more than 300 pass
- Special Sessions can be called by the Governor as needed



Arizona Legislative Website

<http://azleg.gov>

- House and Senate members – who, contact info, positions held, bios, etc
- Follow bills introduced and track bills of interest
- Learn about hearings and other process actions
- Request to speak ability
- State laws
- Wealth of information

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Arizona State Legislative Website

<http://www.azleg.gov/>

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Arizona Legislature 30 Districts



Senate – 30 Members

- Senate President
- Majority Caucus and Leaders – party in control with the most votes.
- Minority Caucus and Leaders
- Committee Chairs
- Staff

House – 60 Members

- Speaker of the House
- Majority Caucus and Leaders – party in control with the most votes.
- Minority Caucus and Leaders
- Committee Chairs
- Staff

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How A Bill Becomes A Law

<http://azleg.gov/aisPDFs/hbillaw.pdf> / <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyeJ5o3E10>

- Legislator opens bill folder
- Bill officially drafted by Legislative Council
- Supportive legislator signatures
- Bill is "dropped" - number assigned
- Leadership assigns to committees
- Chairs decide to hear bill or not, and when
- Committee hearings – testimony, amendments (strike-everything), vote
- Caucus, Floor debate (COW), vote
- Next Chamber similar action
- Possibly Conference Committee & final votes
- Governor action – sign, veto, let go without signature



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Advocacy vs. Lobbying

Advocacy

- Educating Decision-Makers
- Forums & Meetings
- Facility & Agency Tours
- Days-at-the-Capitol
- Voter Registration & Education



Lobbying

- Influencing Specific Legislation
- Taking a Position For or Against a Bill

Understand A Legislator’s Perspective

- Legislators are generalists – business people, lawyers, retirees, homemakers, etc. – usually not human service experts
- They consider over 1,200 bills plus the budget each year
- They get lots of information from a variety of sources
- 5 to 6 communications from advocates had impact in the past, now takes 50 to 60



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Know Your Voice

- Build your own personal relationships
- Your voice:
 - Individual Advocacy – speaking for yourself on behalf of children or families (no registration required)
 - Lobbying – speaking on behalf of an organization or agency (registration and reporting required with AZ Secretary of State)

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Non-Profit Agency Voice



Nonprofits “are allowed to conduct **nonpartisan** activities that **educate** the public and help them **participate** in the electoral process (such as) voter education, voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives and candidate forums.”

— IRS Office of Exempt Organizations

PAFCO Training available

Communication Strategies



- Face-to-face meetings
- Letters, calls and e-mails
- Letters to the editor

Things to Remember



- Be gracious and polite
- Be timely and concise – to the point
- Be honest, don't exaggerate
- If you don't know --- say so and get back with the information
- Avoid cynicism about public officials
- Be constructive
- Be realistic and persistent, recognizing that politics is the art of compromise
- Be informed
- Be patient
- Always thank them for their time

Advocacy and Lobbying Don'ts



- Don't Be Angry
- Don't Be Hostile
- Don't Threaten
- Don't Lose Credibility
- Don't Have Too Much Information
- Don't Be Dishonest or Exaggerate

Face-to-Face Meeting

Before your meeting:

- Plan ahead what you want to say
- Have a one or two page fact sheet to leave which outlines what the problem is, why it's important and what can be done about it
- OK to take others with you

Specific things to relate to *your* legislator:

- Introduce yourself, BRIEFLY address why you're there
- Present your view, be coherent and brief and share your stories
- Ask *your* legislator what she/he will be doing, hold him or her accountable

Letters and E-mails

- Be brief
- Use the subject line in emails
- Identify yourself (especially if you are a constituent)
- Be clear about what you want
- Outline possible effects
- Ask the legislator to respond
- Provide your contact information



Tips for a Successful Phone Call

- Be prepared! Do an outline of what you want to say ahead of time.
- May need to leave a message on voice mail or talk to the legislator's assistant.
- Always be cordial.
- Urge action, but also ask: *How will the legislator vote on this issue?*
- Be prepared to call back to do follow-up.

Useful Websites

- www.azleg.gov
 - Arizona State Legislature
- www.azchildren.org
 - Children's Action Alliance
- <http://azchildren.org/issues/arizona-center-for-economic-progress>
 - The Arizona Center for Economic Progress
- <http://azchildren.org/2013-legislature/state-legislative-district-fact-sheets>
 - CAA Fact Sheets - conditions for children & families by state legislative district
- <http://www.pafcoalition.org/>
 - Protecting Arizona's Family Coalition
- <http://www.vote-smart.org/index.htm>
 - Find your legislator
 - <http://www.azcleelections.gov/home>
 - Guide to AZ elections & to check out candidate debates
- <http://www.azsos.gov/elections/voting-election-information>
 - Arizona Secretary of State elections information



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Join CAA's Alert System



- Be an active voice at the legislature – sign in at a legislative kiosk
- Sign up to receive email alerts about issues affecting Arizona's children
- <http://azchildren.org>



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