



# LEGcon19

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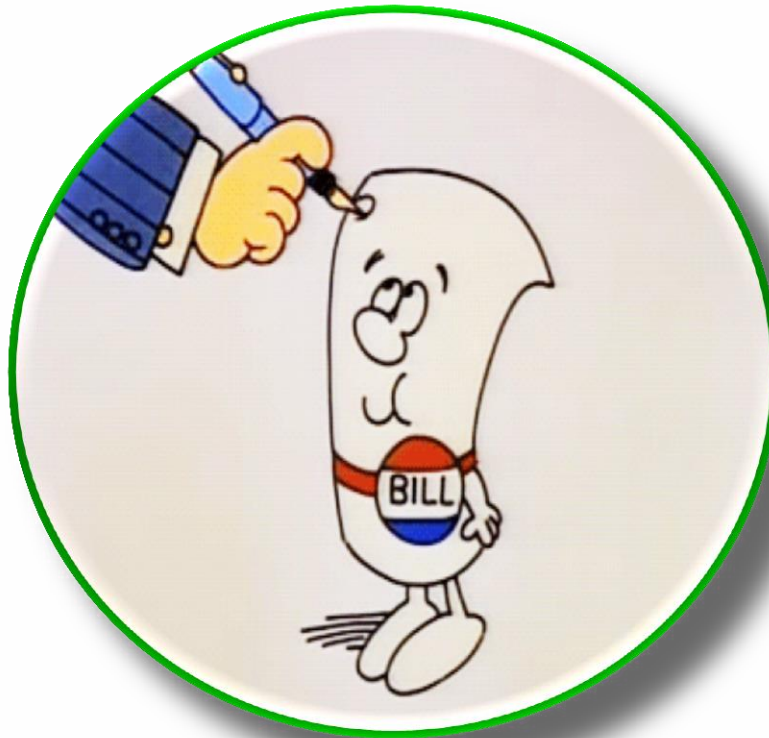
**LEGcon19**

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# Storytelling Via Key Interests-Based Advocacy

Making Your Story More Persuasive

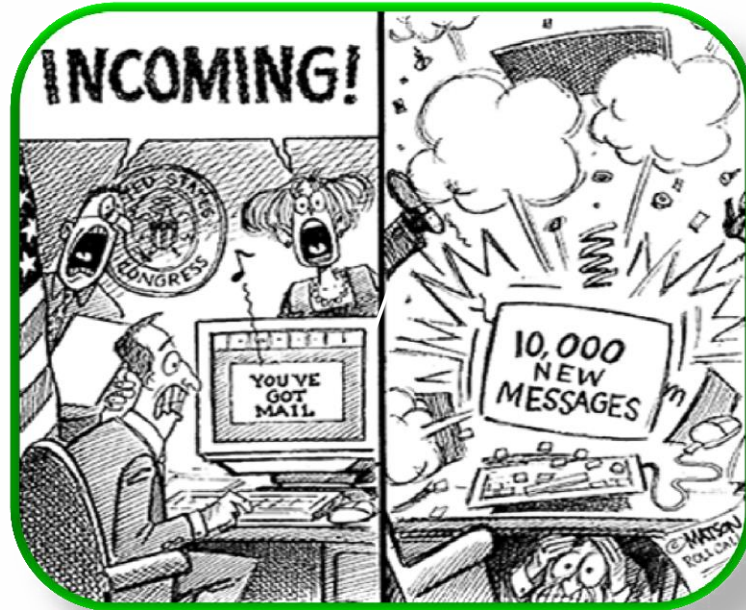
# By the Numbers



# By the Numbers

1803

# By the Numbers





# By the Numbers

What date was the first Capitol Hill Fly-In?

March 22, 1922 - Lawrence Perry





# Why Engage in Policy Advocacy?

# Policy Advocacy: A Competitive Environment



150



200



700



1,300



150



250 (Mar), 400 (Nov)



700 (May), 150 (Nov)



7 Organizations



# Citizen Advocacy: A Critical Ingredient

Federal Public Policy

Regulatory Policy

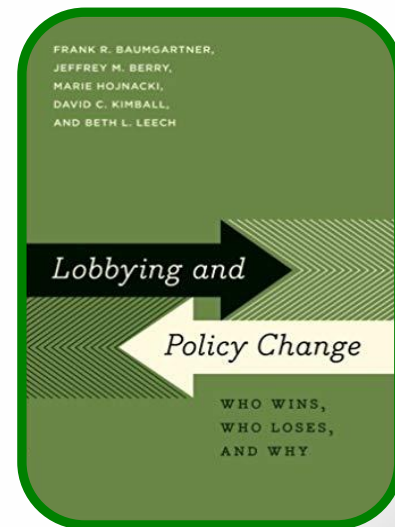


Citizen Advocacy

State Public Policy

# Why Citizen Advocacy?

- “Change Elections” (7 of last 9)
- “Unexpected” changes mid-session (‘98 & ‘15; ‘14; ‘17; ‘18)
- *Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Loses and Why*
  - Followed 98 issues from 1998 to 2002
  - Surprised at who won only *half* the time
  - Found better predictor of success



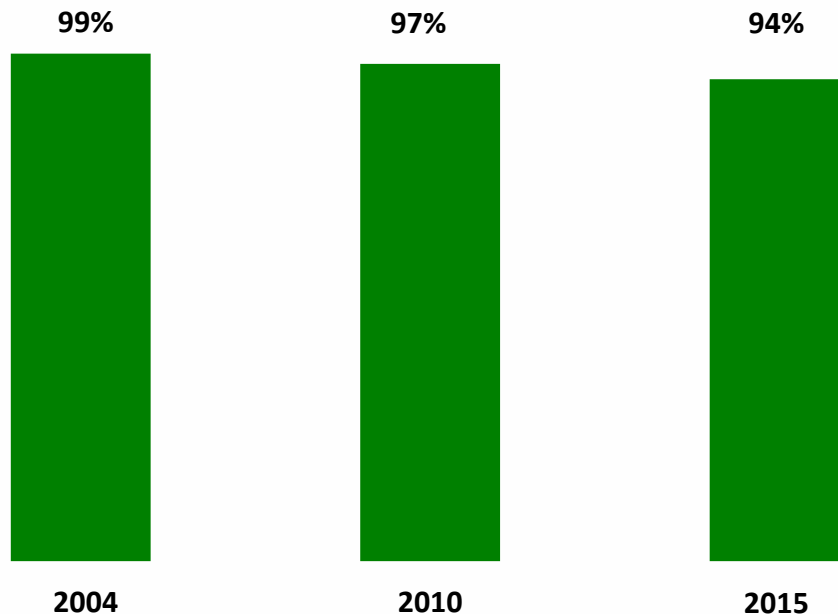
# Why Citizen Advocacy?

- Advocacy is NOT politics; IS informing & educating politicians – there’s a difference!
- NARFE: the *sole* org advocating on behalf of federal workers & retirees
- “Evergreen” public policy strategy
  - Increasing relevance of citizen advocate
  - In-session legislator activity & election trends
  - Impact of varied perspectives & tactics

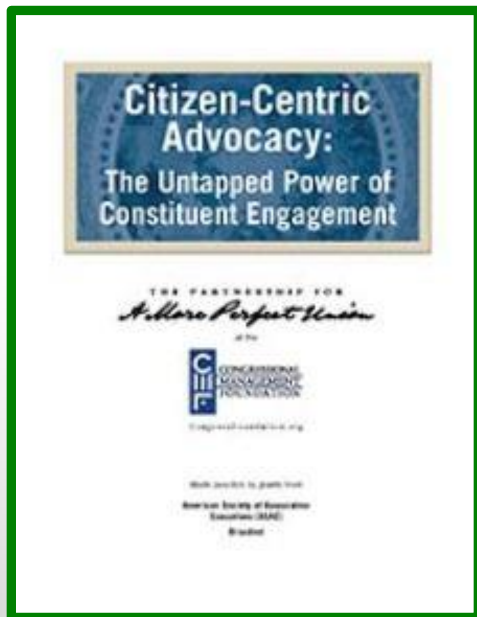


# Why Citizen Advocacy?

Direct constituent interactions are the most influential



# Why Citizen Advocacy?



- Repeatedly ranked in-person citizen advocate meetings as the most influential tactic
- Placed a high value on groups & citizens who build relationships with legislators & staff

Visit from Lobbyist



Citizen Advocate  
In-Person Visit



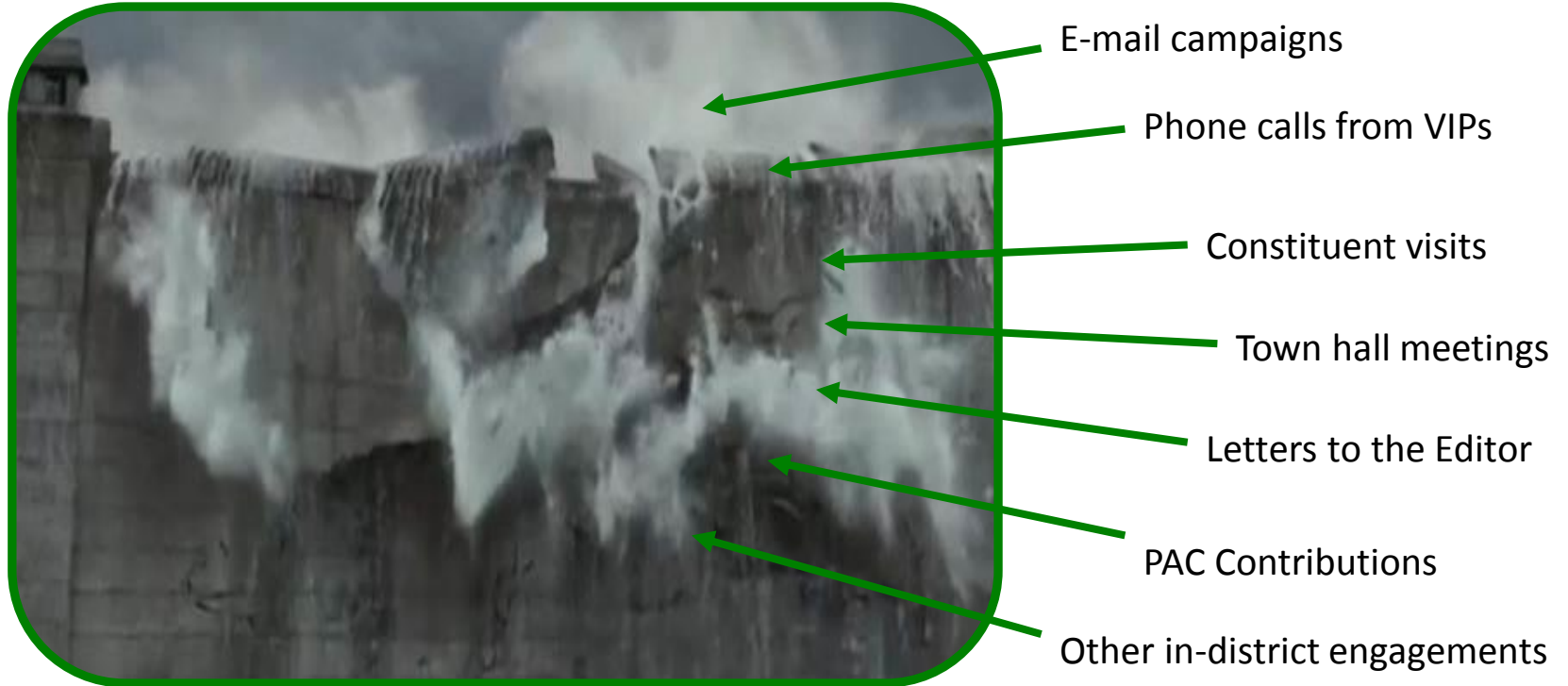


# **Engaging, Influencing & Storytelling: Getting Lawmakers to Listen**



# Getting Lawmakers to Listen

Healthy Advocacy Programs Diversify Tactics to Break Through



# Getting Lawmakers to Listen

- Nearly impossible to change their mind overnight
- Change often requires “continuing the conversation” over years, not just a one-time activism spike
- If they’re on the “bubble” you might move them
- Maybe you can’t switch them from no to yes but can get them to not say anything



# Getting Lawmakers to Listen



Harvard  
Business  
Review

## A Face-to-Face Request is 34 Times More Successful Than an Email 04.11.17

- Despite email's reach, asking in person is significantly more effective
- Must send a 200-recipient email blast to equal the power of asking 6 people in person
- Findings are consistent with previous research showing people are more likely to comply with requests in person than over email

# Getting Lawmakers to Listen

## The Science of Storytelling

### HOW STORYTELLING AFFECTS THE BRAIN

#### NEURAL COUPLING

A story activates parts in the brain that allows the listener to turn the story in to their own ideas and experience thanks to a process called neural coupling.

#### MIRRORING

Listeners will not only experience the similar brain activity to each other, but also to the speaker.



#### DOPAMINE

The brain releases dopamine into the system when it experiences an emotionally-charged event, making it easier to remember and with greater accuracy.

#### CORTEX ACTIVITY

When processing facts, two areas of the brain are activated (Broca's and Wernicke's area). A well-told story can engage many additional areas, including the motor cortex, sensory cortex and frontal cortex.

The Secret?

Finding a Common Bond

# Getting Lawmakers to Listen

Memorable Experiences, Not Just Facts



Amber Hagerman



Ashantie Billie



# Getting Lawmakers to Listen

Memorable Experiences, Not Just Facts

**RollingStone** March 2019

“...nothing is more powerful than the stories of the people affected.

You can roll out statistics and timetables, but the consequences – the emotional connection to the rest of the public – is really what weighed in.”

Speaker Nancy Pelosi



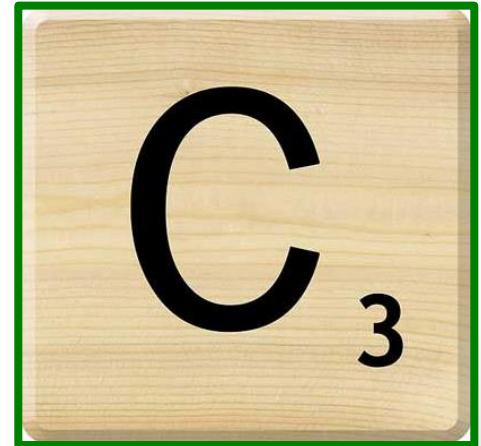


# Getting Lawmakers to Listen

Persuasive Storytelling Takes Practice

Apply the 3 C's

- **Clear** – state purpose upfront
- **Concise** – keep message succinct
- **Charge** – SMART action or activity



# Getting Lawmakers to Listen

## Two Types of Constituents

- ✓ Opinion
- ✓ Interest

# Getting Lawmakers to Listen

## Key Interests-Based Advocacy

An Equation for More Effective Persuasion

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \text{Interest} & + & \text{Ask} & + & \text{Interest} & = & \text{Success} \\ \text{(Constituent)} & & \text{(Legislative)} & & \text{(Legislator)} & & \text{(Increased Chance} \\ & & & & & & \text{of Persuasion)} \end{array}$$

But first?

Discovery

# Getting Lawmakers to Listen

## Key Interests-Based Advocacy: Quality Over Quantity

- Deeper understanding of legislators
  - Perspective
  - Relevance of story to ask & also to legislator
- Every advocate may not be a candidate
  - Messenger per issue
  - Messenger per tactic
- Message appropriate for tactic
- Focus according to targeted legislators





# Applications of Key Interests-Based Advocacy

# Applications of Key Interests-Based Advocacy

**INSIDENOVA**  
NORTHERN VIRGINIA'S LEADING NEWS SOURCE

**Letter: Time to address Va.'s ballooning Alzheimer's needs** May 27, 2015

Editor: Thank you, U.S. Rep. Don Beyer (D-8th), for cosponsoring the HOPE for Alzheimer's Act, which will provide care and support services to those diagnosed with Alzheimer's and their caregivers. I hope we can count on you to support the \$300 million in additional funding for Alzheimer's research in fiscal 2016.

From 2014 to 2015 alone, Alzheimer's disease cost Medicare and Medicaid an additional \$3 billion, going from \$150 billion to \$153 billion. This research funding request is small compared to what is spent on treatment (not cures or prevention, but reactionary spending).

I lost my mother to Alzheimer's in 2013. It was devastating to my family's psyche to watch her waste away. With monthly care costs of \$8,000 per month, it wouldn't have been long before my family's savings were drained. How many Virginia families can afford that expense?

Without doing something to find a cure, the Alzheimer's Association predicts Virginia's Alzheimer's population will balloon by 46 percent in ten years, from 130,000 now to 190,000 in 2025. Virginia gets only about one-half its Medicaid funding from the federal government. Can the commonwealth's budget afford to cover Medicaid's costs when this happens?

David Lusk, Arlington

Ask in 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence

Supporting argument hints to INTEREST at risk

Advocate INTEREST tied back to ask

Advocate interest tied to INTEREST of targeted legislator



# Applications of Key Interests-Based Advocacy



# Applications of Key Interests-Based Advocacy



“I calculated once how many times I fell during my skating career – 41,600 times. But here’s the funny thing: I got up 41,600 times.

That’s the muscle you have to build in your psyche – the one that reminds you to just get up.”

Scott Hamilton  
Retired Figure Skater,  
Olympic Gold Medalist







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