

Sharing Your Story With Your Legislators



The Idaho Self-
Advocate Leadership
Network



CENTER ON DISABILITIES AND
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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University of Idaho

College of Education, Health and Human Sciences



The Purpose of This Training is to Learn:

- ▶ How to find your legislators.
- ▶ How to contact your legislators.
- ▶ How to testify at the Capitol.
- ▶ The Dos and Don'ts when visiting the Capitol.
- ▶ To have fun!



Four Words to Know

- ▶ District
- ▶ Senator
- ▶ Representative
- ▶ Partisan



What is a Legislative District?

- ▶ A District is a division of land, like a county or parts of a city, marked off for administrative, electoral, or other purposes.



What is a Senator?

- ▶ A Senator is a person who is a member of a state's senate, or the United States Senate.
- ▶ A Senate is the smaller assembly or council of people in the legislative branch of our states' and national government



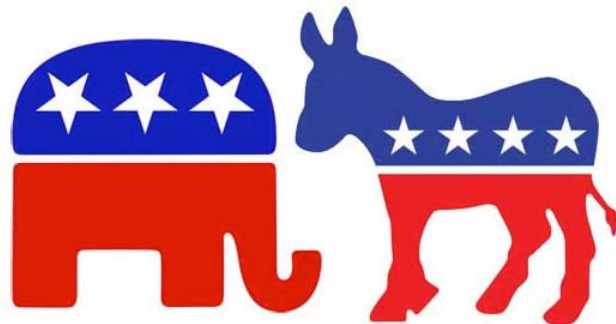
What is a Representative?

- ▶ A Representative is a person who represents a community in the U.S. House of Representatives or a lower house in certain state legislatures.



What Does **Partisan** Mean?

- ▶ Partisan is when a person supports a certain cause, group or political party. Examples are:
 - “I voted Democrat!”
 - “Well, / am a Republican!”



Finding Your Legislators

- ▶ Google your state's legislative website.
 - Find the link that says "Who are my legislators?" Put in your address to find your District and State Senator and Representatives.
- ▶ Ask your family members or friends for help.



Learning About Your Legislators

When you find your legislators, you will be given:

- ▶ Their name.
- ▶ The district they serve in.
- ▶ Where they're from and where they live.



Learning About Your Legislators Continued

- ▶ A brief life history about them and their family.
- ▶ What job they have in their community.
- ▶ How long they've served as a legislator.
- ▶ The committees they serve on.



How to Send a Letter or Email

An example...

From: Shiloh Blackburn (email address)

To: Senator Mark Nye (email address)

Subject: Support H464 (Idaho Health Care Plan)



Dear Senator Nye,

My name is Shiloh, and I live in Pocatello. I'm a self-advocate who's very concerned about keeping my Medicaid services and "Closing the Gap." If I lose my services or there are severe limits placed on the Medicaid program as it is now, I'm looking at losing what independence I have. Please consider supporting H464. Thank you for serving Idaho.

Sincerely,

Shiloh Blackburn



How to Call Your Legislators

- ▶ Depending on when your state's legislative session is (when your state's legislators meet at your state's capitol), you can call your legislators at the Capitol, or at home.
- ▶ You can find their phone numbers on your state's legislative website.
- ▶ Ask a friend or family member for help if you need it.
- ▶ Sometimes you will have to leave a message for them.



What Should You Say on the Phone?

- ▶ Share your story!
- ▶ **Say something like:**

“Hello Senator Nye, my name is Shiloh. How are you? I live in Pocatello and I would like to talk you about the Idaho Health Care Plan. It would help me and many other Idahoans keep our Medicaid services and allow us to keep living independently in our towns and cities. Please consider supporting Idaho Health Care Plan. Thanks for you time.”



Remember To:

- ▶ Keep it short and to the point.
- ▶ Ask them if they will support or oppose the issue.
- ▶ Thank them for their time.
- ▶ **Ask:** "Do you have any questions for me?"
 - It's ok to say, "I don't know, but I could find out for you."



How to Testify at the Capitol

- ▶ Legislators want to hear from the people living in their towns and districts.
- ▶ Tell them how the bill will affect you, your family and friends.
- ▶ They like personal stories. (Short ones.)



A List of Don'ts at the Capitol

- ▶ **DON'T** be partisan. Don't bring up any political party.
- ▶ **DON'T** express anger or threaten the legislators.
- ▶ **DON'T** criticize or insult other people or legislators. Not everyone is going to share your opinion.



When at the Capitol

- ▶ **DON'T** question why somebody else said or did something.
- ▶ **DON'T** exaggerate or make up stories.
- ▶ **DON'T** continue speaking when your time is up.
- ▶ But it is ok to say: **“I don't know the answer.”**



When Testifying, Remember To:

- ▶ **Say:** “Good morning (or afternoon) Madame Chair (or Chairman) _____ and Members of the Committee.”
- ▶ **Say:** “Thank you for your time today.”
- ▶ **Use your story to make your point.**
- ▶ **End by saying,** “I urge you to support/oppose _____. I am willing to answer any questions you might have. Thanks for listening to me.”



**Sharing your story is
important and can help your
community be a better place!**

**Help create a better
tomorrow!**



THANK YOU FOR VISITING!!!

Hope you enjoyed the training today!
For more training videos and
information on self-advocacy and
related topics, please visit:

<https://idahocdhd.org/isaln/>

