

Advocacy for Pediatric Mental Health in Kentucky

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Advocacy in Action: How to Influence Public Policy in Frankfort



Frankfort Will Happen...

- Whether you are there or not...
- And what happens in Frankfort affects YOU!
 - You can choose to be a victim of the system or YOU can choose to influence the system
 - Remember that legislators are elected by YOU.
 - The Governor is elected by YOU.
 - They are there to serve YOU!



A Democracy requires that the
VOICE of the **PEOPLE** be heard.



Why should that voice be YOURS?

Because YOU...

- Care – and care passionately
- Are knowledgeable about YOUR issues
- Are able and willing to share with others (decision-makers and other citizens) what YOU know and experience
- Are willing to work...and work hard
- Are willing to learn to be an effective advocate

Why should that voice be YOURS?

Because YOU...

- Provide accurate, unbiased information
- Have a position and can articulate it
- Have access to the “free” media
- Can rally grassroots support
- Can work in coalitions with others
- Are willing to keep on “keeping on”



BEFORE YOU JUMP IN

DON'T FORGET...

**Those who love sausage
and the law should watch
neither being made!**

KENTUCKY LAWMAKERS

Kentucky Senate – 2014 GA:

- 23 Republicans 14 Democrats
- 1 Independent (who caucuses with Republicans)

9 Seats are up for election in 2014:

5 are Republicans, 3 are Democrats and 1 is Indep

Kentucky House – 2014 GA:

- 54 Democrats 46 Republicans

53 Seats are up for election in 2014:

28 are Democrats and 25 are Republicans

General Election: November 4, 2014

Last Day to Register to Vote: October 6, 2014

The Commandments of Advocacy

- I. Thou shall register and vote; you must be in the game to play!
- II. Thou shall know the players: legislators, the committee chairs, legislative leadership, LRC staff, and the Executive Branch personnel.
- III. Thou shall know your issue well and relate that issue to your legislators, understanding there are many pressing concerns.

The Commandments of Advocacy

IV. Thou shall understand the process and the rules of the game.

V. Thou shall make available accurate, reliable information to your legislators and other players in a timely fashion!

VI. Thou shall be creative in building coalitions and partnerships, looking for shared interests, educating others in your cause and working to “put a face” on your issue.

The Commandments of Advocacy

VII. Thou shall never underestimate your power as an individual to “change the world”.

VIII. Thou shall be willing to compromise, to put a foot in the door.

IX. Thou shall stay in touch with your legislators all the time – not just during the session.
(Remember that the best time to build relationships is when you don't need them!)

The Commandments of Advocacy

X. Thou shall never give up. Remember, there's always the next session! (Think of yourself as the Energizer Bunny...just keeping on....)

XI. MOST IMPORTANT COMMANDMENT:

Thou shall treat the legislator or policy-maker as you would want to be treated – with courtesy, respect and a “Thank You”!

How Can YOU Best Advocate?

- Identify YOUR Senator and Representative
- Your HOME address to www.vote-smart.org or 1-888-votesmart (1-888-868-3762)
- Contact them at home and identify yourself as a **constituent**
- Contact them in Frankfort by Message Line, phone, email, letter and/or visit
- **MESSAGE LINE: 1-800-372-7181**
- Follow the action at www.lrc.ky.gov

How Can YOU Best Advocate?

- Reach out to potential (even unlikely) partners to increase your impact:
- Advocacy Action Network – mental health, disabilities, access to healthcare
www.advocacyaction.net
- KY Voices for Health – improved health care access and better health status
www.kyvoicesforhealth.org

Why Advocacy?

The anthropologist Margaret Mead said it so well: “Never forget that a small group of thoughtful people can change the world. Indeed, that’s all that ever has.”