



# HOW TO CREATE LEGISLATIVE CHAMPIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL ADVOCACY



# HOW TO CREATE LEGISLATIVE CHAMPIONS FOR YOUR ISSUE



**PRO TIP:** Every issue needs at least one — and preferably multiple — legislative champions, whether you are trying to pass or stop something. Demonstrating support among their constituents is the most effective way to turn a fence-sitter into a champion.

## WHY ARE CHAMPIONS IMPORTANT?

- Every good cause needs a champion to spearhead the effort.
- There is no substitute for colleague-to-colleague advocacy.
- Not every co-sponsor needs to be a champion, but every issue needs a champion to give it priority and intensity via leadership.
- You are competing with multiple interests and agendas. Champions are the difference you need to make sure you succeed.

## WHO WOULD MAKE A GOOD CHAMPION?

- A member of leadership, if you can get him/her.
- An influential member close to leadership.
- A member who has a personal interest in your issue.
- A member whose constituents care about your issue.

## HOW DO I DEMONSTRATE SUPPORT AMONG CONSTITUENTS?

- Move your issue from one known as a “special interest” to broad grassroots support.
- A cost-effective grassroots campaign begins with data to build your targeted audience.
- Compelling messaging that takes your audience through the three phases of communications: awareness, persuasion and activation.
- Capture support in a way demonstrable to legislators ... likes on Facebook, emails and phone calls, supporters showing up to public events.

## INFLUENCERS VS. A BROADER AUDIENCE

- Time and resources permitting, you may want to target influencers of a legislator vs. a broader audience.
- Influencers are the people around the legislator with whom they are most likely to stay in touch – party leaders, donors, business leaders in their district, known activists, etc.

## DON'T MAKE NEW FRIENDS AT THE EXPENSE OF OLD FRIENDS

- Don't forget to publicly thank your current champions while you are building new ones.
- Run a thank-you campaign among their constituents who care about your issue.
- Don't take anyone for granted. Nothing means more to a politician than positive reinforcement that they are doing the right thing, especially among the voters who will send them back to office or on to a higher office.

**REMEMBER:** Champions are your key to legislative success. Reinforce your support among current champions while building new ones. A thank-you campaign or an award that gets earned media and then is amplified on social media are great ways to let your champions know you appreciate them.

