How to Advocate in the time of COVID

TRAINING SESSION
How to Advocate in the Time of COVID AGENDA

1. The Coalition's History
2. The Coalition's Policy, Programs, & Grant
3. How a Bill Becomes a Law
4. Meeting with Legislators Virtually
5. Participating in Legislative Session and Committee Action
6. Activism on Social Media
7. Learning From Thought Leaders and Political Pundits
1989  First Grant Funding
1990  Carol!
1991  Family Support Act
2020  30 Years

The Coalition's History
How a Bill Becomes a Law in Tennessee
1. A bill is introduced
2. Numbered and passed on consideration
3. Referred to committee
4. Heard in committee - intro and debate, recalled or recommended for passage by consent
5. Referred to calendar
6. Passed on third consideration
7. Engrossed
8. Companion bills are reconciled (if necessary)
9. Enrolled, signed, assigned PC number and incorporated into code
Meeting with Legislators Virtually

JASON
Know your legislator

- Senator Bo Watson - Hamilton County
- Physical Therapist
- Bow ties
- Chair: Finance, Ways and Means
- Chair: Rules Committee
- Member: Commerce & Labor
- Member: Health & Welfare
- Member: Joint Fiscal Review Committee
Be Prepared

• Write down key points
• Practice what you are going to say
• Respect the 5 – 15 minute time limit
• Focus on a single issue or bill
• Be concise and use time wisely
Share YOUR Personal Story

• Briefly tell them about yourself so they get to know you
• Don’t be intimidated – they work for you
• You are the expert on your needs
• Spend most of your time on the issue you want to discuss
Meeting virtually vs. Meeting Face to Face
What’s Different?

1. Be familiar with the technology (Zoom, WebEx, FaceTime, etc.)
2. Log in 5 – 10 minutes early
3. Quiet room with good lighting
4. Have a Plan B – phone to call legislator if Plan A fails
Meeting virtually vs. Meeting face to face.

What’s the same?

• Dress appropriately
• Be courteous
• Introduce yourself – who you are, the issue you want to discuss and that you are from their district.
• Don’t forget to listen
• It’s ok to disagree
• Thank them!
Together We Can Make a Difference

Participating in Legislative Session and Committee Action

AMANDA
How Legislators Talk About Issues that Matter

- TN State Legislators meet in committees
- Committees focus on a specific issue like “Education”
- It’s important to pay attention to committee work because they talk about issues that will affect us
The TN General Assembly Website is:

www.capitol.tn.gov

Follow the issues that matter to you by following those legislative committees

There is a House and Senate version of most committees
Standing Committees

**Commerce and Labor**
Responsible for legislation concerning commerce and insurance.

**Health and Welfare**
Responsible for public or private hospitals; health offices and their administration; institutions and services.

**Education**
Responsible for legislation concerning schools and secondary education.

**Judiciary**
Responsible for civil laws; criminal laws; judicial proceedings; apportionment of elected officials and governing bodies.

**Energy, Agriculture and Natural Resources**
Responsible for legislation concerning energy; forestry; natural resources; conservation, game and fish, mines and minerals.

**State & Local Government**
Responsible for forms of local government; utility districts; assistance to local and municipal governments; matters dealing with revenue and taxation levied by local governments.
Committee Membership - legislators who meet as part of this committee

Committee Officers have been chosen to lead this committee

You can reach out to these legislators to talk about the issues that the committee is meeting on
1. From the main Committee page: click on Current Committee Calendar

2. Calendar for this week’s committee meeting with a list of bills they plan to talk about

3. Click on a bill # to learn more
4. This will open a new page that has information about the bill sponsors, bill text and the path the bill has taken through the state legislature up to today.

If you care about this issue, you can contact the bill sponsors.
1. From the main Committee page: click on Current Weekly Schedule

2. Find out when the committee is meeting this week or next week
1. From the main Committee page: click on Video

2. You can watch the recording of past committee meetings.

3. If want to watch a live committee meeting, you can click the icon “In Progress” or “View Event”
3. This will open a new window with the live streaming video of the committee meeting.

On the bottom of the screen, the bill they are currently talking about is listed.

On the right-hand side is the committee calendar for this meeting.
Summary: What’s Available on the Committee Page

List of Committee Members (who meets to talk about this issue)

Current Committee Calendar (what they’ll be talking about in their meeting)

Current weekly schedule (when they’ll be meeting)

Video - watch live or past meetings
Bocce & Policymaking are Team Sports
Activism on Social Media

CHYNA
Social Media Takes Us **FURTHER**

The easiest way to show your support for people with disabilities and to get your legislator's attention is to participate on social media.
**Spread Awareness**
by sharing content from disability thought leaders.

**Stay Alert**
by following local disability groups that notify you to policy changes.

**Take Action on Disability Issues**
by commenting, tagging and direct messaging your local government and elected officials.

**Speak Up!**
by signing and sharing digital petitions in opposition or support of a piece of legislation.

**Share Your Experiences**
by creating original posts about challenges (accessibility issues, confusing informational materials, etc) and tagging your representatives.

**Plus**
tag us @tndisability and we will share your posts!
What Makes a Good **SOCIAL POST**?

- Short, clear, and personal message
- Eye-catching video & photos
- Hashtags that are relevant to the conversation
- She tagged the Coalition and the Dept of Health to increase the chance that the post will get shared further.

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Chyna

February 19 at 2:01 PM · 🎞️

I’m getting healthy by getting vaccinated! Vaccines are important to me because I enjoy being out in my community and love people. Thank you Hamilton County Health Department for making this possible! 🍀

#Covid #tn #disability Tennessee Disability Coalition Tennessee Department of Health
The Basics on **HASHTAGS**

Including hashtags in your posts means that you are taking part in a conversation happening on social media. They make your posts visible to non-followers.

- **Do NOT use spaces, punctuation or symbols.**
- **Do NOT string too many words together.**
  The best hashtags are short and memorable.
- **Use relevant and popular hashtags.**
  If it is too obscure, it will be hard to find.
- **Limit the number of hashtags you use.**
  More isn’t better.
- **Make sure your accounts are public.**
  Otherwise only your followers see your posts.

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**TOP DISABILITY HASHTAGS**

- #disability
- #disabilityrights
- #disabilityawareness
- #invisibledisability
- #disabilitypride
- #disabilityjustice
- #disabilitybenefits

**TOP POLITICAL HASHTAGS**

- #TNleg
- #TN
- #cripthevote
- #tenncare
- #medicare
- #TNpol
- #TNpolitics
- #TNsenate
- #COVID19
- #systemic
Leaders in State Government to **FOLLOW & TAG**

**GOVERNOR BILL LEE**
@GovBillLee

**LT. GOVERNOR RANDY McNALLY**
@ltgovmcnally

**CAMERON SEXTON**
@CSexton25
@cameronsextontn

**PLUS**

Your **LOCAL** representatives work for you!
look them up and stay connected:
Disability Day on the Hill

My name is Mark
- I have a disability.
- I care for someone with a disability.
- I advocate for people with disabilities.
I live in east Tennessee.
I "go further" by:

Volunteering

Fill out this form (link in Social Media Toolkit):
www.tfaforms.com/4875746
We will send you a complete graphic!
I'm speaking at Tennessee Disability Coalition's Disability Day on the Hill this THURSDAY! My legislators Senator Bo Watson (TN-11) and State Representative Mike Carter are invited to come hear me speak about a topic that is important to me! #TnCovidVaccine #disability Tennessee Department of Health @tndisability

My name is Chyna

I have a disability.
- I care for someone with a disability.
- I advocate for people with disabilities.

I live in east Tennessee.

I "go further" by...

speaking out for my friends!
Learning From Thought-Leaders and Political Pundits

COURTNEY
What is a "Thought-Leader"?

An individual or organization that is recognized as an authority in a specialized field and whose expertise is sought.
What is a “Political Pundit?”

A person who offers to mass media their opinion or commentary on political analysis for which they are knowledgeable and/or considered a scholar.

In other words - an expert.
1. MEDIA
   - State Government Reporters
   - Opinion Editors

2. DISABILITY ADVOCATES
   - Disability Advocacy Organizations
   - Individual Disability Advocates

3. HASHTAG CAMPAIGNS & OTHER RELEVANT INFLUENCE
WHY FOLLOW STATE GOVERNMENT REPORTERS

They help us understand complex policy issues

They raise awareness of Tennesseans impacted by those complex policy issues through their stories.

They keep us up-to-date on general information and updates about the General Assembly.
WHO TO FOLLOW STATE GOVERNMENT REPORTERS

Natalie Allison
Tennessean
@natalie_allison

Kimberlee Kruesi
Associated Press
@kkruesi

Erik Schelzig
Tennessee Journal
@schelzigg

Sam Stockard
Tennessee Lookout
@stockardsam
MEDIA
LOCAL STATEHOUSE REPORTERS
WHY FOLLOW LOCAL STATEHOUSE REPORTERS

- They help us understand how a state policy will impact us on a local level.
- They often reach out to followers on social media for a local-person to provide commentary on an issue and/or share their story.
- They cover local representatives more closely.
WHO TO FOLLOW  LOCAL STATEHOUSE REPORTERS

Andy Sher
Chattanooga Times Free Press
@AndySher1

Ian Round
Daily Memphian
@raniound

Stephen Elliott
Nashville Post
@elliottstephenB

Slater Teague
WJHL Johnson City
@sl8rt
Deaths of disabled children are no less tragic | Opinion

Disability is so feared and stigmatized in our society that we see it as a fate worse than death.

Courtney Johnson Guest columnist
Published 4:06 a.m. CT Mar. 18, 2023

Story Highlights

- Courtney Johnson is an autistic adult and college student at East Tennessee State University. She is president of the Neurodiversity Club and Delta Alpha Pi and founder of Tri-Cities Autism Social Club.

Created in 2018 in response to the death of George Hodgins, an autistic man, the Disability Day of Mourning candlelight vigil is held each year worldwide on March 21 to commemorate the lives of people with disabilities who have been murdered by their families and caregivers. Within the past five years alone, over 6,000 people with disabilities have died in this way. The Autistic Self Advocacy Network tracks these cases of filicide and provides a list of names. Each year, the names and ages of the dead are read out loud.

I first became a site coordinator here in East Tennessee back in March 2018.

With a small group of self-advocates, we
What is an “OpEd?”

Short for "opinions and editorials page", is a written piece published by a newspaper which expresses the opinion of an author usually not affiliated with the outlet. In other words - by a reader.
**WHY WRITE AN OPED?**

- They provide an opportunity to voice your opinion on a public way.
- They help raise awareness of issues that impact us.
- They are often shared/retweeted by like-minded followers.
Deaths of disabled children are no less tragic | Opinion

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**Why Follow Opinion & Editorial**

Local and community outlets in your legislators’ district.

Legislators pay special attention to the news outlets within their districts because their constituents read them.
WHO TO FOLLOW STATE OPINION & EDITORIAL

David Plazas  
The Tennessean  
@davidplazas

Alex Hubbard  
The Tennessean  
@alexhubbard7

Erik Schelzig  
The Tennessee Journal  
@schelzig

Holly McCall  
The Tennessee Lookout  
@jhollymc
Rep. Cameron Sexton, Speaker
House District 25
Crossville
Meet Assistant Opinion Editor for The Tennessean

ALEX HUBBARD
Disability Advocates: 

INDIVIDUALS & ORGANIZATIONS
WHO TO FOLLOW DISABILITY/ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

Tennessee Disability Coalition @tndisability
Disability Rights TN @tnrights
Tennessee Justice Center @tnjusticcenter
WHO TO FOLLOW  
DIAGNOSIS/INDEPENDENT LIVING ORGANIZATIONS

- AutismTN  
  @Autism_TN

- ALS Association  
  TN  
  @ALSTennessee

- American Liver  
  Foundation  
  @liverUSA

- JDRF Middle  
  Tennessee  
  @JDRFMidTN

- EmpowerTN  
  @Empower_TN
#Hashtags
HASHTAGS TO FOLLOW  DISABILITY ADVOCACY & CAMPAIGNS

#CripTheVote  #TheBarriersWeFace  #ServiceDog
#highriskCOVID19  #AbleismExists  #Spoonie
#LetsGoFurtherTN  #ActuallyAutistic  #InvisibleIllness
#DDH2021  #DeafTalent  #DisaBodyPosi
WHO TO FOLLOW DIAGNOSIS/INDEPENDENT LIVING ORGANIZATIONS

Autistic Self-Advocacy Network @autselfadvocacy
National Council on Independent Living @NCILAdvocacy
Rooted in Rights @RootedInRights
Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered @SARTACenter
HASHTAGS TO FOLLOW DISABILITY ADVOCACY & CAMPAIGNS

#Autistic #ActuallyAutistic
SPREAD AWARENESS by sharing content from disability thought leaders.

TAKE ACTION ON DISABILITY ISSUES by commenting, tagging and direct messaging your local government and elected officials.

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES by creating original posts about challenges (accessibility issues, confusing informational materials, etc) and tagging your representatives.

STAY ALERT by following local disability groups that notify you to policy changes.

SPEAK UP! by signing and sharing digital petitions in opposition or support of a piece of legislation.

PLUS tag us @tndisability and we will share your posts!
LET’S GO FURTHER.
DDH 2021
LET'S GO FURTHER NEXT STEPS

Advocacy Toolkit Overview

Register for Town Hall on 3/11 at Noon CT

Not too late to schedule a virtual meeting with legislators

Text "FURTHER" to 72690
Anniversary of the signing of the ADA
72690 = July 26, 1990