

A close-up portrait of a young woman with curly brown hair, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a grey, short-sleeved, textured knit sweater.

RALIANCE

Ending Sexual Violence in One Generation

District Advocacy 101

To Change “What is” Into “What Should Be”

A woman with curly hair, wearing a grey sweater, is holding a blue folder and a pen, looking down at the folder. This image is partially obscured by a teal overlay.A woman in a light blue shirt and maroon pants is walking down a hallway, looking to her left. This image is partially obscured by a teal overlay.

Hello!

Terri Poore, Policy Director
Ellen Fern, Government Affairs Consultant



**RALIANCE is a national partnership dedicated to ending sexual violence in one generation.
NSVRC, NAESV, CALCASA-Prevent Connect**

Agenda

- What's in the toolkit?
- Key Issues Updates (VAWA, VOCA, SASP, RPE)
- Timeline
- Advocacy 101
- Planning & Conducting your meetings
- Talking Points & Key Asks



The 2020 District Advocacy Toolkit

RALIANCE.org/district-advocacy-toolkit-2020/



Advocacy 101

Advocacy Timeline

Talking Points

Templates

Advocacy Report

Congressional
Calendar

Informational
Handouts

Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization



- April 4 anniversary of HR 1585 passing the House
- Negotiations in Senate bogged down
- Sen. Feinstein introduced S. 2843 on 11/3 companion to HR 1585 with 46 D's co-sponsoring
- Sen. Ernst introduced S. 2920 with on 11/21 with 12 R co-sponsors (rolls back tribal language/fails to close boyfriend loophole)
- Election dynamics
- April push
- Path to victory....

VOCA



- Crime Victim Fund formula grants non-taxpayer source of funding for most local victim services
- Deposits are down significantly
- Cuts are coming to states but at varying rates
- Appropriations
- Legislative solutions
- Local/state advocacy solutions

Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP)



**PROTECT
SURVIVORS**

- Formula grant (all states) created in VAWA (2005)
- Only federal funding source specifically for SA services
- FY 20 increase from \$37.5 to \$38 million
- \$3 million cut in President's FY 21 budget
- Asking for increase to \$50 million

Rape Prevention & Education Program



- Increased \$1.3 million in FY 20 to \$50.75 million
- Formula grant administered by CDC through state health departments for sexual violence prevention
- Shifts at the federal level (community level focus)
- Shifts at the state level
- Advocacy to require funded collaboration with state sexual assault coalitions

Legislative Advocacy Timeline



WEEK OF MARCH 9

**MAKE MEETING
REQUESTS**



WEEK OF MARCH 30

**GATHER MATERIALS,
HOLD PREP MEETING
FOR ATTENDEES,
PRACTICE TALKING
POINTS**



WEEKS OF APRIL
6/13

HOLD MEETINGS



WEEK OF APRIL 27

**THANK YOU NOTES,
FOLLOW UP WITH ANY
REQUESTED
INFORMATION AND
INVITATIONS**



AUGUST

**TOUR/EVENT WITH
MEMBERS OF
CONGRESS**

Advocacy 101



What is Effective Advocacy?

- Effective advocacy relies on building trusted relationships with policymakers and their staff which takes time and requires consistency
- Advocacy is rooted in mutual respect and trust
 - Even if you disagree with a member, you want them to trust your facts and sources
 - This is the best foundation for educating--and ultimately persuading--policymakers





Requesting Your Meeting

- Locate your Member's district office locations.
 - Go to: www.senate.gov or www.house.gov to find your member and their website
 - Contact information can usually be found at the bottom of their website or under "contact" information
- Call the district office where you'd like to meet and ask who you should direct your request to and how they prefer receiving meeting requests.
 - For a Member meeting, you will most likely initiate your request through the scheduler in the district office
- Within 3-5 days of initiating your request, call the district scheduler to confirm they received it .
 - Following up is key!



Requesting Your Meeting

- For member level meetings, initiate your request **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**.
- If the member is unavailable, the scheduler will likely connect you with a staffer who handles issues related to sexual violence.
 - It is perfectly acceptable to meet with staff
- If the scheduler does not connect you and you do not know the staffer who handles these issues, you can call the district office and ask who they recommend.

Preparing For Your Advocacy Meeting



Preparation Items



Know who you are meeting with and where that Member stands on the issues important to you and your organization.



Keep your message consistent with your organization's policy priorities



RALIANCE has provided policy one-pagers and key talking points that offer guidance on how to talk about key policy issues.



Get to know the priorities well before your advocacy meetings and practice your talking points.

Planning Your Meeting

Who will
come?
Invite
Influencers

Designate
roles:
Facilitator,
notes, talking
points for
each person

Prepare your
talking points
& your “ask.”

Know your
audience:
Website,
news, high
profile cases.



Normal Things to Expect:

- Changes in who you're meeting with
- A brief meeting (especially with a Member)
- Change in/unexpected location
- Staff that you meet with may be young

Conducting Your Meeting



The Do's



Be concise

Have your key points ready.



Leave time

to ask and answer questions.



Know the Issue

If you are talking about specific legislation or funding, use the name and number.



Be an Expert

Speak from your area of expertise and share personal stories.

The Do's



Stories Sell

Storytelling puts real life faces to facts and data.



Get Into Details

Ask specific questions and try to get specific commitments to “asks”.



State Your Influence

Mention you are a constituent and how many constituents you represent or provide services to in their district.



Be passionate

but make sure to stay calm and in control of your words, body language and emotions.

The Don'ts

Avoid doing
most of the
talking!

Do not issue
explicit or veiled
threats or bring
“politics” into the
meeting

Don't give an
answer if you
are unsure

Leave without
clarity on next
steps

Concluding Your Meeting



The Do's:



Ask if there are any questions.



End on a positive note and express thanks.



If you have been asked a question you did not know the answer to, or the Member or staff has asked for additional information, reiterate that you will follow up with an answer.



Remind the official that you want to serve as a resource.



Invite the Member or their staff to attend an upcoming event or to tour your program.

Following up



At least one thank you letter to each person who participated in the meeting.



If staff participated in your meeting, an email is an appropriate format for follow-up. For Members, a handwritten thank you is a nice touch.



In your follow-up, remind them of any commitments made during your meeting.



Use social media to share relevant information and thank them for action.



Attend and participate in local events such as Town Halls.



Keep in touch with relevant data and upcoming events!



Talking Points



Framing the Conversation

- Give the Representative, Senator, or staff member any supporting materials.
- Your story is the most important message you can share. Personalize the issue by talking about the needs in your state or district and the people you serve.
- By sharing the needs in your community and the difficulties you face meeting those needs, you paint a picture of the critical need for funding that relates directly to the Member's constituents.



Federal Funding: The Need & Its Impact

- Programs aimed at preventing and responding to sexual assault such as VAWA, VOCA, RPE, and PHHS Block Grant have been extremely successful in our community and across the nation.
- However many victims still have unmet needs and we must continue to improve our responses to address and prevent the crisis of violence in many communities.
- The demand for services increases with high profile cases, national commentary (such as #TimesUp and #MeToo), better outreach, improved response, and increased awareness.

Federal Funding: The Need & Its Impact

- According to a 2019 survey by the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, at current funding levels half of rape crisis centers have a waiting list for counseling services while 84% of programs experienced increased demand.
- In the past few years, demand for programs funded by the Rape Prevention & Education Program have skyrocketed; funded through the CDC, this is the primary source for prevention programming.
- The evidence base for RPE has progressed significantly, as has the demand, and further investment in the program is desperately needed.



A smiling woman with dark hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, holding a tablet computer. She is looking up and to the right with a positive expression. The background is a blurred office setting.

Services & Prevention: How We Achieve Change

- Federal funding plays an important role in helping fill the gap and meet local needs.
- VOCA, a non-taxpayer fund, supports over 4 million victims across the nation each year
- SASP is the only federal funding source specifically dedicated to sexual assault services.
- RPE goes to every state to fund prevention.

Tailoring Talking Points

- It's important to connect the dots and drive home the point that sexual violence happens everywhere, including the communities they represent.
- Use data and knowledge about your agency and the communities your serve

How many survivors do your serve?

Do you have a waiting list?
If so, how long?

Is there an increase in people requesting services?

What are you noticing in your community?

The Specific Ask

Is Representative/Senator _____ willing to support:

Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act
with key enhancements and no rollbacks.

\$50 million for the Sexual Assault Services Program at the Office on Violence
Against Women

Steady funding for the Crime Victims Fund at DOJ
Funding for Tribes
Enact Language & Advocate to Increase Deposits

Increased funds to \$75 million for Rape Prevention & Education Program
Require/Fund Involvement of State Coalitions



Social Media

- Be sure to share your visit on social media!
- You can use twitter to thank your Member or post a photo on Facebook
- Example: Thank you @SenatorABC for meeting with (insert program name) to talk about critical funding for survivors of sexual assault.

A black and white photograph of a woman with curly hair, smiling broadly and shaking hands with another person whose back is to the camera. The woman is wearing a dark blazer over a light-colored top and a necklace. The background is bright and out of focus.

Thanks!

Any questions?

→ For more information, contact tpoore@raliance.org