

Hill Day 2021 – Using Your Voice: Prep for Meetings and What to Expect



**National
Children's
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*The Force Behind
Children's Advocacy Centers*



Hill Day and Using Your Voice



Panelists

- Denise Edwards, NCA Government Affairs

- Will Laird, NCA Government Affairs



Agenda

- Discuss top legislative priorities/issues to discuss in meetings:
 - ★ Impact of COVID and current caseload in centers
 - ★ VOCA Fix
 - ★ American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding
 - ★ FY22 budget/annual funding
 - ★ CAPTA

- What to expect during meetings

- Q&A

Legislative Priorities/Issues to Discuss in Meeting

● Impact of COVID:

- ★ The caseload numbers, and increases
- ★ Challenges you are facing – funding, capacity, etc.

● VOCA Fix

- ★ What cuts you are currently experiencing
- ★ The positions VOCA covers/what VOCA dollars are used for
- ★ Support for getting VOCA Fix passed
 - VOCA Fix passed House 384-38 on March 17th
- ★ Currently senate list is at 55 –still have 45 to go!
- ★ Next steps for the senate?
 - Urge folks to push their respective senate leadership (Sen. Schumer for Ds, Sen. McConnell for Rs) to bring bill to the floor

Legislative Priorities/Issues to Discuss in Meeting

● American Rescue Plan Act

- ★ Discuss any conversations you have been having with state and local leaders on accessing ARPA dollars
- ★ Remind folks that CACs did not have a special carve-out in ARPA, and that more dollars are still needed

● FY22 Funding

- ★ Release as much from CVF for VOCA as possible
- ★ VOCAA at \$48 million
 - Important note – President’s Budget for FY22 - \$50 million for VOCAA. While the PB doesn’t become law, it is a good starting point for budget discussions. (And most offices will ask what the “PB” is for FY22.)
- ★ Release significant increased dollars for CAPTA

Legislative Priorities/Issues to Discuss in Meeting

● CAPTA Reauthorization

- ★ Increasing the proposed CAPTA funding.
- ★ Including CACs as an “eligible use” of these funds and highlighting that CACs are the models that states should be using when using MDTs;
- ★ Including NCA/National Coalition to End Child Abuse Deaths pushed recommendations:
 - Annual reports on fatalities from review panels with a uniform set of definitions;
 - Requiring multidisciplinary team collaboration;
 - Disclosure of confidential information to state agents to ensure child safety;
 - Beefing up caseworker support and training;
 - Interstate Data Exchange System for CPS;
 - Strengthening disclosure and closing up exceptions allowed;
 - Requiring states to disclose gaps between assurances and performance.
- ★ Including provisions to provide for immunity from civil and criminal liability for individuals making good faith reports of suspected abuse
- ★ Including funding for Jenna’s Law/Erin’s Law/child sexual abuse prevention education in the schools.

What to expect in the meeting?

What Happens at the Hill Meeting?

- Whether it is a virtual meeting or in-person – Hill meetings are the same!
- Introduce all meeting attendees and tell them about your CAC, the kids you serve – basically an update from home.
- They will likely ask follow up questions – but they want to know what you are doing everyday. So, they want to hear from you!
- They will then turn to “why” you are meeting with them, and ask if there is anything they can do to help.
- At that point, you will want to talk about the legislative priorities

What Happens After the Hill Meeting?

- After meeting, send a follow up thank you!
- It goes a long way and gives you an opportunity to provide any follow up info that was requested.
- Invite them to come tour the CAC when they are back home.
- Also, offer to be a resource – they will appreciate it!

Is this Lobbying?

- In 2007, Congress passed a law establishing new thresholds that determine what “is” a lobbyist and who must register at the federal level.
- A person is required to register as a “lobbyist” if
 - ★ (1) they have “more than one lobbying contact”; **AND**
 - ★ (2) their “lobbying activities” during a quarterly period constitute at least 20% of the individual’s time.
- If the definition of “lobbyist” is met, the organization is only required to register if it spends more than \$10,000 on lobbying activities.
- Each state has its own separate rules related to lobbying.

I am a nonprofit - is this Lobbying?

- Federal lobbying rules have ***different*** requirements for nonprofit organizations.
- The rules make a distinction between education and direct lobbying activities – with ***only direct lobbying requiring disclosure.***
- For example, if a nonprofit meets with a House or Senate member to educate them about CACs, or is called to testify on child abuse, neither action is considered lobbying activity.
- However, meeting with Congress to advocate for our federal funding in the CJS appropriations bills is considered lobbying – at which point the previous rules on registration apply.

Is this Lobbying? Examples of what ISN'T Lobbying?

- Requesting a meeting with your US Sen and US Rep to introduce yourself and provide information about your CAC.
- Meeting with Members/staff to update them on your CAC, the number of kids you serve, and your day-to-day operations.
- Meeting with Members/staff to discuss general child abuse issues and some of the needs for public policy changes. (For example – VOCA Fix, child welfare system, mandatory reporting, child sexual abuse prevention, institutional child sexual abuse, impact of opioids, etc.)
- Meeting with Members /staff to discuss public policy that highlights the impact of the MDT/CAC model.
- Meeting with Members or staff to discuss the impact of trauma-informed care and how this plays out in the CACs.
- Responding to direct questions from Member/staff about CAC funding needs.

Questions?

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