

# Professional Advocacy:

## Where to begin when you are unsure where to start

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## Disclosure

- ▶ We have no financial or nonfinancial relations relevant to the content of this presentation

## Overview:

- ▶ Why advocate?
- ▶ How does change occur?
- ▶ Options to initiate change
- ▶ Examples
- ▶ Summary
- ▶ Question and answers

## Learning Objectives

- ▶ Participants will be able to identify local, state and national agencies that can assist in pursuing change
- ▶ Participants will know the appropriate means of contacting these agencies
- ▶ Participants will have an outlined letter to send or email that they can customize for the particular needs
- ▶ Participants will be able to identify networking opportunities w/ professionals interested in similar advocacy endeavors

## Why is advocacy so important?

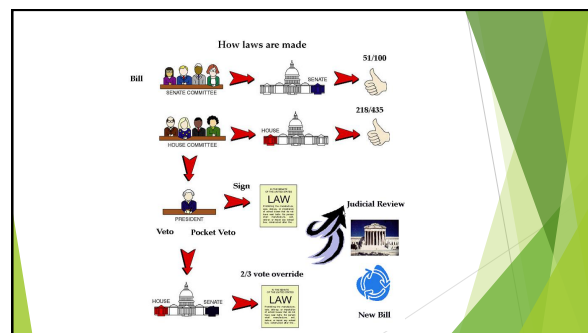
- ▶ We are always advocating for our patients/clients/students, so why not ourselves and our profession?
  - ▶ We are the experts, we need to educate our representatives
  - ▶ Increased advocacy for our field = improved outcomes
  - ▶ Increased advocacy for our field = overall professional satisfaction
- ▶ What changes would YOU like to see in our field? Some examples:
  - ▶ More manageable caseloads/lower productivity expectations
  - ▶ Increased collaboration with doctors, teachers, administrators, etc.
  - ▶ Change in education requirements for the master's/doctoral programs
  - ▶ WHAT CAN YOU IDENTIFY?

## Types of advocacy

- ▶ Legislative
  - ▶ Making and revising LAWS
    - ▶ Introducing new bills for laws
    - ▶ Changing current bills
    - ▶ Opposing bills which have been introduced
- ▶ Regulatory
  - ▶ Making and revising RULES
    - ▶ Influencing government agencies at the state and federal level
      - ▶ CMS
      - ▶ US Department of Labor
      - ▶ Department of Education
      - ▶ Board of Examiners

## So....how DOES change occur?

- ▶ How a bill becomes a law
  - ▶ The general "overview:"
    - ▶ [https://votesmart.org/education/how-a-bill-becomes-law#.VY2\\_r0RHIU](https://votesmart.org/education/how-a-bill-becomes-law#.VY2_r0RHIU)
- ▶ Policy changes at the organizational level
  - ▶ Contingent on corporate policies/procedures
  - ▶ Chain of command in your facility...who do you contact/address?



## Where do we start?

- ▶ Option 1: Contact GSHA
- ▶ Option 2: Contact state representatives
- ▶ Option 3: Contact ASHA
- ▶ Option 4: Contact other organizations (i.e. GOSSLP/Georgia Academy of Audiology)
- ▶ Option 5: Learn your avenues at the organizational level
- ▶ Option 6: Be a firestarter—Start your own grassroots movement (i.e., Social Media...you might NOT be alone!)

## Option 1

- ▶ Contact GSHA...who are the key players in our organization
- ▶ GSHA Contact Information:
  - 925B Peachtree Street NE, Suite 620, Atlanta, GA 30309
  - (404) 496-5559 (phone)
  - [execdir@gsa.org](mailto:execdir@gsa.org)
- ▶ President: Jill Barton
- ▶ President elect: LaBrita Cash Baskett
  - ▶ [gsa.memberclicks.net/executive-council](http://gsa.memberclicks.net/executive-council)
- ▶ What will GSHA do:
  - ▶ GSHA can inform you if this is already an issue that is "on their radar" and if action is already being taken to address this concern.
  - ▶ GSHA can address these concerns with their GSHA employed lobbyist

## Option 2

- ▶ Reach out to your state representative by:
  - ▶ Email
  - ▶ Attend town hall meetings
  - ▶ Face-to-Face meetings
- ▶ Who IS your state representative?
  - ▶ House of representatives:
    - ▶ Buddy Carter; Sanford Bishop, Jr.; Lynn Westmoreland; Henry "Hank" Johnson, Jr.; John Lewis; Tom Price; Rob Woodall; Austin Scott; Doug Collins; Jody Hice; Barry Loudermilk; Rick Allen; David Scott; Tom Graves
    - ▶ <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/GA>
    - ▶ <https://www.house.ga.gov/Representatives/en-US/HouseMembersList.aspx>
  - ▶ Senators
    - ▶ Johnny Isakson
    - ▶ David A. Perdue
    - ▶ [www.senate.ga.gov/senators/en-US/SenateMembersList.aspx](http://www.senate.ga.gov/senators/en-US/SenateMembersList.aspx)

## Option 3

- ▶ Contact ASHA
  - ▶ ASHA Action Center
    - ▶ [www.asha.org/about/contacts/](http://www.asha.org/about/contacts/)
    - ▶ Phone number (members): 800-498-2071
    - ▶ Phone number (non-members): 800-638-8255
- ▶ What will ASHA do?
  - ▶ Political Action Committee (PAC): non-partisan, voluntary committee of ASHA, who advocate for SLPs, audiologist and researchers on Capitol Hill
    - ▶ [www.pac@asha.org](mailto:www.pac@asha.org)
  - ▶ ASHA lobbyists
  - ▶ ASHA Advocacy
    - ▶ [www.asha.org/advocacy](http://www.asha.org/advocacy)
    - ▶ [grassroots@asha.org](mailto:grassroots@asha.org)

### Option 4

- ▶ Contacting other organizations
  - ▶ Georgia Organization of School-Based Speech Language Pathologist (GOSSLP)
  - ▶ The Georgia Academy of Audiology (GAA)

### Option 5

- ▶ Organizational level
  - ▶ Know your "go-to" person
  - ▶ What is the chain of command?
  - ▶ Is there a compliance hotline?
  - ▶ [http://www.dysphagia cafe.com/2015/09/16/does-the-clinician-need-a-communication-care-plan/?fb\\_action\\_id=10153729742649789&fb\\_action\\_types=og.likes](http://www.dysphagia cafe.com/2015/09/16/does-the-clinician-need-a-communication-care-plan/?fb_action_id=10153729742649789&fb_action_types=og.likes)

### Option 6

- ▶ The Power of One
- ▶ The grassroots movement
  - ▶ [grassroots@asha.org](mailto:grassroots@asha.org)
- ▶ E-advocacy
  - ▶ [www.takeaction.asha.org](http://www.takeaction.asha.org)
  - ▶ <http://cpreengage.com/asha/action>
- ▶ Existing Social Media groups:
  - ▶ Facebook (Medical SLP Forum, School SLP, ASHA Members for Change)
  - ▶ Twitter (#SLPeeps, #SLR, #audiology)
  - ▶ Pinterest (ASHA Advocacy)
  - ▶ LinkedIn

### But...I'm not a professional advocate! HOW do I communicate with these entities??

- ▶ Letter sample and examples (see appendix)
- ▶ Know your RIGHTS to speak up
- ▶ VOTE in your GSHA and ASHA elections
- ▶ [www.asha.org/Advocacy](http://www.asha.org/Advocacy)

### It seems like NOTHING ever changes...So, why should I even TRY?

### Moving forward

### So...what can YOU do NOW?

- ▶ Education/outreach to community
- ▶ Inservices to physicians, medical professionals, teachers, administrators, etc.
- ▶ Get ACTIVE! Join GSHA, SIGs, Social Media forums, town hall meetings (YES, anyone CAN go and voice YOUR concern!, run for office, etc.)
- ▶ Letters to the editor
- ▶ School-based SLPs may consider joining teacher's unions (in Georgia, many educators join PAGE-Professional Association of Georgia Educators)
- ▶ Be the squeaky wheel...it's OK!
- ▶ Keep in mind...we all have the ability (and OBLIGATION!) to voice our concerns and work for CHANGE.

### Questions . . .



### A final thought:

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

~Margaret Mead

### Sample letters

See appendix for sample letters

- ◆ Letter to CMS written by Rhonda Polansky of MassTex, Mobile Imaging
- ◆ Letter to state representative regarding telepractice which was sent by ASHA
- ◆ Also see ASHA website for sample letters to request meetings with state representatives and thank you letters