

# **Agents of Change: Advocacy for Youth Mentoring**

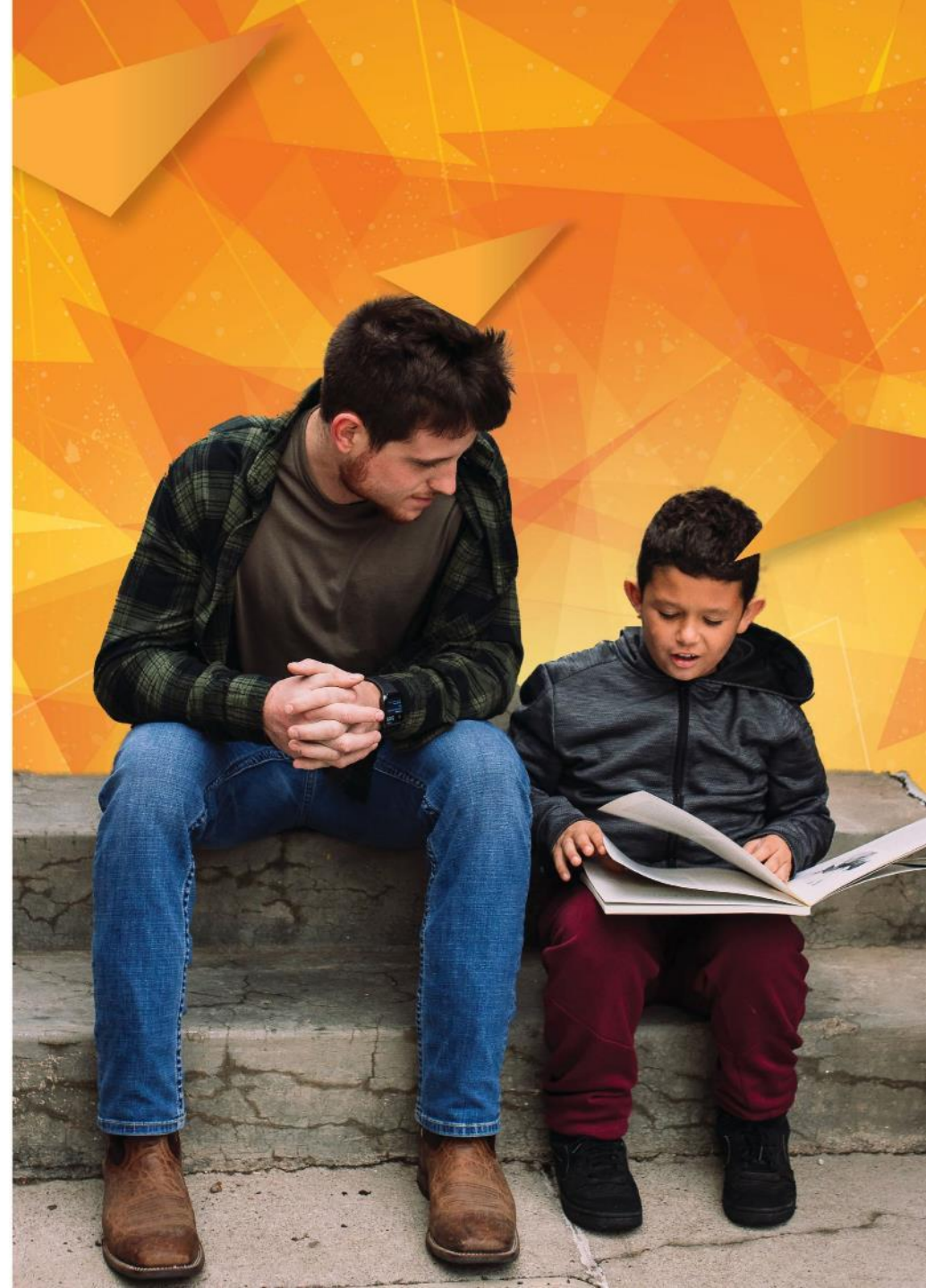
**Caden Fabbi**

**Director, Government Relations**



# Agenda

- I. Introductions and Icebreaker
- II. Grassroots Advocacy 101
- III. Elements of Effective Advocacy Messaging
- IV. Practicing your Pitch
- V. Advocacy August





# Introductions & Icebreaker

# Introductions and Icebreaker

Log on to [menti.com](https://menti.com), code 5336 0137

Answer: **When you think about the qualities of a really good advocate, what words describe them?**



MENTOR

# Breakout Room Icebreaker

- Introduce yourselves to each other and answer the following questions:
  - **What is an issue that you are passionate to advocate for?**
  - **What are some organizations that do advocacy well?**



The image features two young men in a dynamic, low-to-the-ground pose, suggesting they are playing basketball. The man on the left is wearing a white t-shirt and grey athletic pants, and is holding a basketball with both hands. The man on the right is wearing a red t-shirt and dark shorts, leaning forward with his hands near the ground as if ready to rebound or pass. The background is a vibrant, abstract pattern of overlapping triangles in various shades of orange and yellow. The overall mood is energetic and positive.

# Grassroots Advocacy 101

# Doing advocacy well



# Types of Advocacy

- *Grassroots advocacy/organizing*
- *Lobbying*
- *Public awareness/education*



# Grassroots Advocacy Definition

- Grassroots advocacy happens when people use strategic tactics to educate and persuade decisionmakers on the issues they care about
- Grassroots work can be done by organizations, campaigns, and concerned citizens
- Grassroots advocacy is important because it is how people advocate for themselves and their communities



# How does grassroots advocacy influence institutions?

- It is the duty of elected officials to listen to their constituents and address their concerns
  - Powerful motivators: reelection, recognition, and influence
- Effective grassroots advocacy can wield as much influence as the biggest corporation



# Grassroots Advocacy Tactics

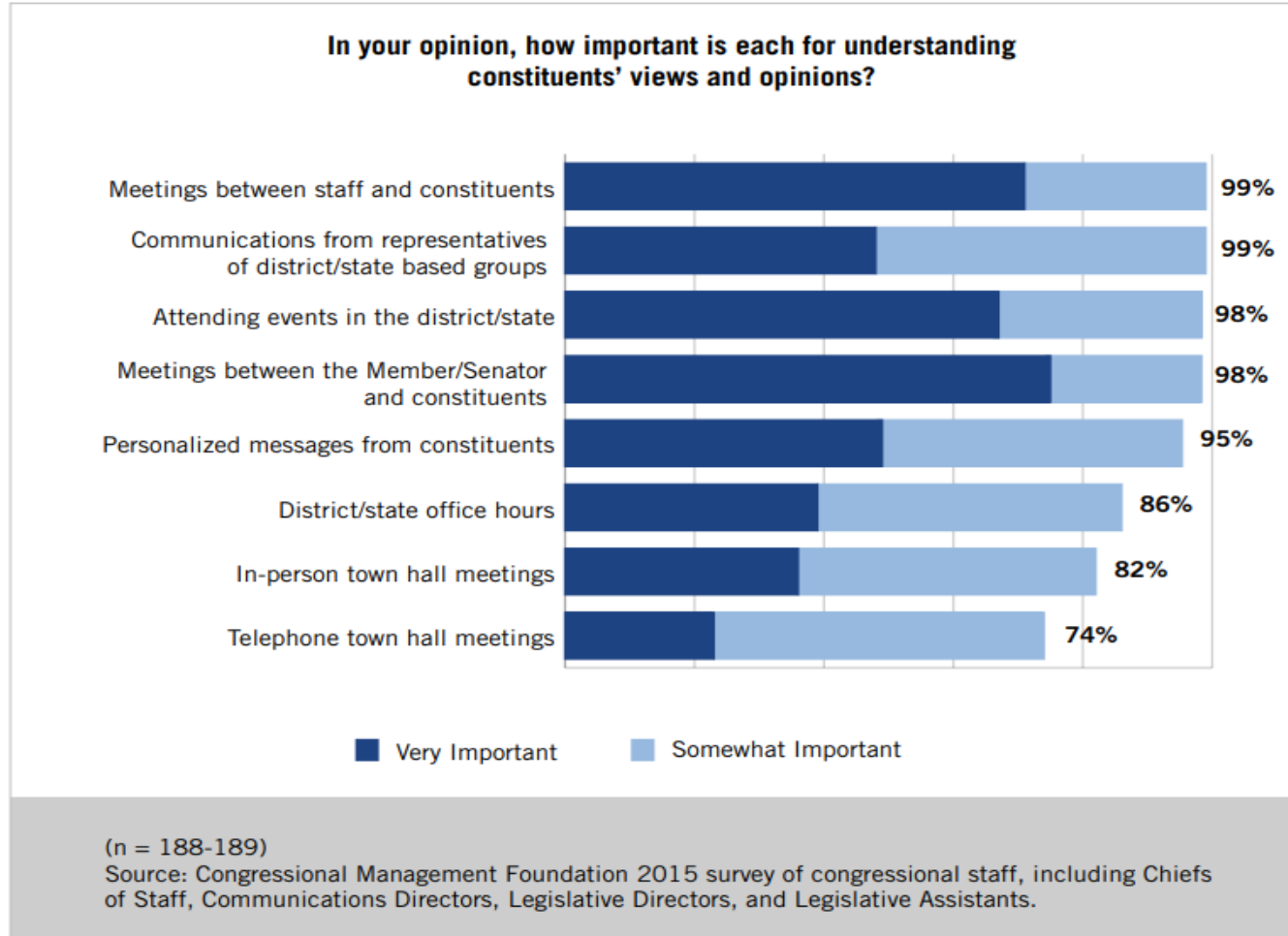
- Legislative campaigns
  - Contacting/meeting with your elected officials to advance policy/funding
  - Providing public testimony
- Media lobbying
  - TV, radio, newspapers
  - Social media
- Mass movements
  - Protests, boycotts, walk-outs
  - Marches



The image shows two women in a laboratory or classroom setting. They are both wearing clear safety goggles and are focused on their work. The woman on the left is holding a small glass dish and appears to be adding or examining something. The woman on the right is holding a larger glass beaker and looking at it with a smile. In the foreground, there is a rack of test tubes, some containing red liquid. A yellow box is visible on the left side of the table. The background is a vibrant red with a geometric, low-poly pattern. The text 'Advocacy Messaging' is overlaid in the center in a large, white, bold font.

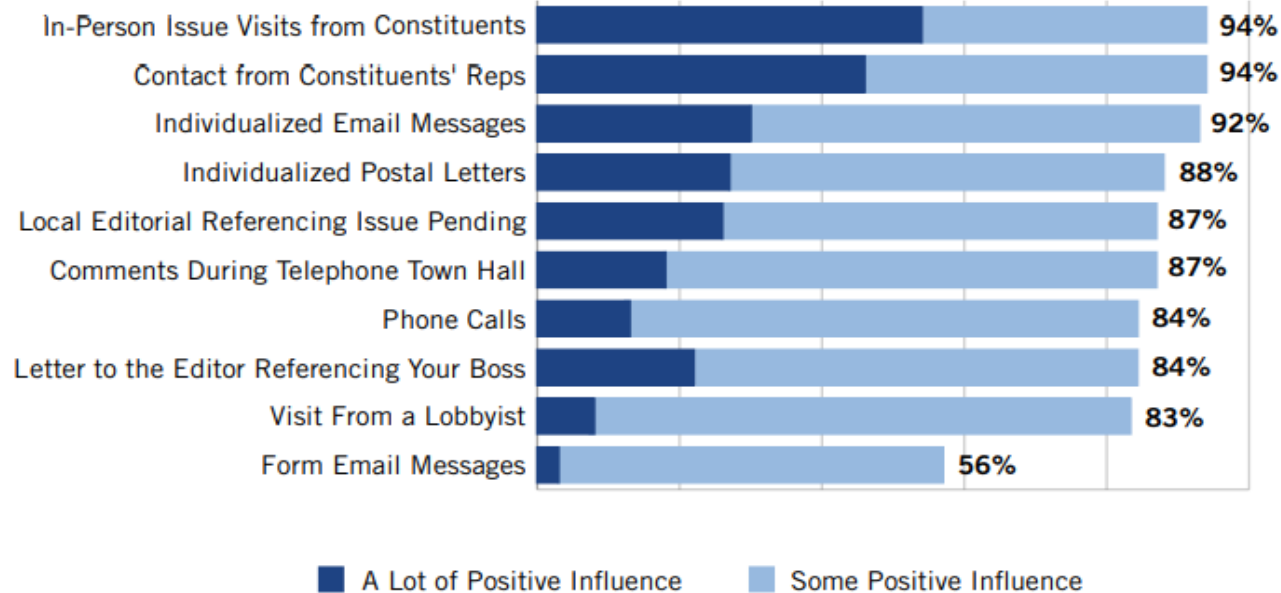
# Advocacy Messaging

# All types of advocacy make a difference.



# Direct constituent interactions have more influence than other advocacy strategies.

If your Member/Senator has not already arrived at a firm decision on an issue, how much influence might the following advocacy strategies directed to the *Washington office* have on his/her decision?



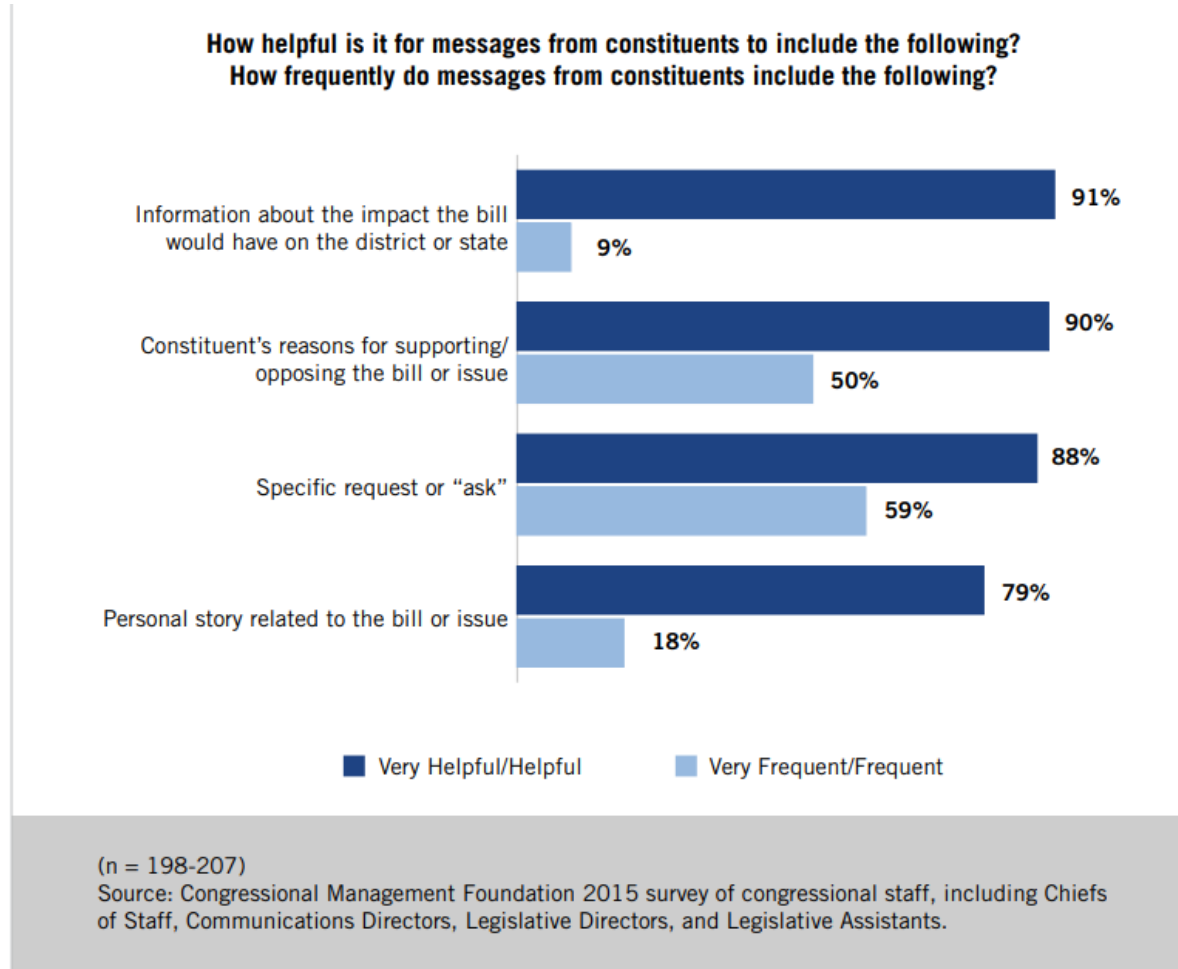
(n = 190-192)

Source: Congressional Management Foundation 2015 survey of congressional staff, including Chiefs of Staff, Communications Directors, Legislative Directors, and Legislative Assistants.



MENTOR

# The content of your message matters!



A photograph of two women in a laboratory setting, both wearing safety goggles and smiling. They are working with glassware, including test tubes and beakers. The background is a red geometric pattern. The text "Elements of Effective Advocacy Messaging" is overlaid in white.

# Elements of Effective Advocacy Messaging

# Advocacy Communication Best Practices

- Have a specific ask and clear goal in mind
- Discuss the impact, importance, and urgency for constituents
- Communicate with a lens that would be appealing to their perspective and passions
- Connect to humans; have an emotional appeal



# First: Develop a Clear Ask

Policy asks (ideal)	Relationship-building asks
Introduce, vote for, or vote against legislation	Visit people or places in the community that relate to the issue (i.e. a school-based mentoring program celebration; mentoring conference)
Send a letter to a government agency about a specific concern	Write an article for your newsletter or local/national media
Draft or sign onto <b>Dear Colleague Letters</b> (or other formal methods of communication)	Share a message on social media to communicate support for your issue
Help you find and gather information from agencies and research services	Make a speech on the House or Senate floor about the issue
Submit a statement to the official record	Hold a town hall/community meeting on the issue

# But don't ask for this!

- Anything related to money or support for their campaign
- A business favor, or something that's not relevant to what you're there to advocate for



# Impact: Research, Data, and Talking Points

- [Consume quality media](#) that reports on the latest research



MENTOR

# Urgency and Importance: Research, Data, and Talking Points

- Review websites of organizations you trust
  - MENTOR's Advocacy Resources page
  - General mentoring talking points
- Research the officials you're advocating to
  - Scan their legislative record, committees, party
    - MENTOR's legislative scorecard
  - Google their name with key words to see if there are past statements on the topic
  - Look for connections with their life experience and those close to them
- Bring data of your own community and industry impact
  - Number of constituents affected; estimated economic impact; success stories from the community



# Connecting to Humans: Articulating your Personal Story

*These questions can help shape your story:*

- Why did you become an advocate for this issue?
- How does this issue you are advocating for affect you?
- Do you have friends, family, clients, customers, or colleagues with compelling stories that you can lift up/share?



# ACTIVITY: Your Personal Story

- Use the issue you identified that you were passionate about in the icebreaker
- Take 5 minutes to write a few sentences about why you care about the issue
- Tie it in to an ask
- Share in breakout rooms

**Example: I decided to become an advocate for mentoring because I personally experienced how a school-based mentoring program helped get me on track academically and eventually become the first in my family to enroll in college. My mentor helped me to gain positive outlets, connections, and motivation to stay engaged in my academics. I want to be able to give to others the relationships that helped get me to where I am today. Unfortunately, my program has a waitlist; if you increase funding for youth mentoring, more organizations like mine would benefit. That's why I ask that you support increasing funding for youth mentoring.**





# Advocacy August

# Advocacy August Campaign

- Each year, MENTOR manages an #AdvocacyAugust campaign to encourage youth mentoring advocates to get inspired, increase their skills, and take action
- This year, the focus is on sharing advocacy wins, voter engagement, and increasing participation of less engaged advocates for them to become an Agent of Change
- MENTOR will be releasing many new resources and blog posts throughout the month



MENTOR

# #AdvocacyAugust Calls to Action

- Watch the recording from the [Effective Strategies for Election Year Impact webinar](#) on August 12<sup>th</sup>
- Action Alert through [MENTOR's Action Center](#)
- Nominate a [Mayor for Mentoring](#)
- Review the new resources and blogs shared



MENTOR

# Legislative Campaign Activity: Action Center!

*In your web browser, type in [mentoring.org/advocacy](https://mentoring.org/advocacy)*



MENTOR

# Additional Resources

- [Mentoring.org/advocacy](https://mentoring.org/advocacy)
- [Public Funding for Mentoring Programs](#)
- [Legislation to Expand Mentoring Opportunities](#)
- [Grassroots Advocacy Resources](#)
- [Issue-specific Advocacy Resources](#)
- [MENTOR's Advocate Academy](#)



Questions?



**MENTOR**