

Introduction

Kristie Sepulveda-Burchit I am Executive Director of Educate. Advocate. and we have served families with children with special needs since 2010. I am not on Facebook or any social media personally any longer (We have a Facebook, Twitter and Instagram page for Educate. Advocate.). Educate. Advocate. has been active in opposing vaccine bills going back to AB 499 from 2011, AB 2109 from 2012 and SB 277 from 2015. We actively worked against home visiting bills and Children Bill of Rights bills (SB 18 as well as companion bill SCR 41). Organized with Christina Hildebrand of A Voice for Choice Advocacy and others and we went up to Sacramento with a group of families to lobby for bills we supported and against bills we didn't in 2017 which was extremely successful and taught me so much. In 2017 we did many local legislator meetings on SB 18. In both December of 2017 and 2018 Christina Hildebrand of A Voice for Choice Advocacy and I went to Sacramento to meet with staffers and give them a bill package of bills we wanted them to sponsor. We were able to get a bill sponsored last year and two this year both under the category of special needs. One of these is still active this year, AB 605. Shannon Primer board member of Educate. Advocate. and member of Empower Family California is also helping with AB 605. Educate. Advocate. is affiliated with diverse coalitions including CA4SSI, the Lanterman Coalition and more. I've been on my school board, I am currently chair of the IHSS Advisory Committee in my county. I am currently registered not affiliated with a political party and have been registered in the past a Democrat.

Making an appointment with legislators or their staff

Decide who will be facilitating the meeting for your local meeting.

Facilitator, you call the local office and ask who the scheduler is for the local office and their email address. That person is the gatekeeper of the schedule of both staff and the legislator. You send the scheduler an email requesting a meeting with the legislator or staff if the legislator is unavailable. You put in the email that you would like to discuss upcoming bills. **If they have bills that you support or that you have common ground with you may want to include that in your email request.** You of course include that you are a constituent and then include any names of fellow constituents joining the meeting or wait until a follow up email to let them know others joining. If you do not hear from them in a day or two call the office and ask to speak with them and check that your email did not go to spam (this can happen).

*Another tip, go to their events sign up for their email list find out when coffee mornings are, health fairs etc. Many are having health fairs in August show up talk to them and say you want a face to face meeting with them!

Prepare for the meeting

Besides having your talking points ready you want to prepare for the meeting. The facilitator of the meeting should know who is attending the meeting and what specifically they will focus on when they speak (if they want to speak) during the meeting. As the facilitator of the meeting prepare an order of how the meeting will go meaning the order of people speaking at what specific points they will bring up and how long they have to speak. (Please note, some may think you are bossy or label you this way but this is how to have an effective meeting which is what we want so I suppose we will have to live with that label.)

You want to have a makeup of those attending the meeting that resembles the district as best as you can if at all possible. Also if you can find someone nearby that has a medical exemption willing to go that would be great (if received a medical exemption through a doctor who took insurance for it even better).

Do research on what issues appeal to your legislator. What bills have they done or recently introduced that you like and want to thank them for? When you open the meeting (facilitator) bring this up as one of the first points. You want to find common ground as much as you can between you and the legislator (or their staff representing them).

For SB 276 look up how the legislator you are seeing voted on SB 277 (if they were in office) and see if they had issues if they were in office with the medical exemption and if they voted yes on SB 277 if they did so because the medical exemption was so broad.

Currently while Senator Pan is authoring SB 276 Senator Ben Allen (the other main co author) abstained on SB 276 in the Senate.

It's always easier to know who you are meeting with whether it be staffers or the legislator beforehand. During meeting with staff normally they take notes of what you are saying, they say very little and it is very easy for everyone to go around the room and give their points. However when you meet with a legislator it can be like the wild west as things get brought up that you were not at all expecting and conversations easily turn to other things that you were not at all expecting to address. Be prepared for that with legislators. Facilitator try to make sure you can be on your toes and incorporate what they are saying with bringing forward the next point when you are able to keep it coming back to your talking points.

Talking points/Leave behind/AMENDMENTS

You will want to prepare a "leave behind" document and you do not need to reinvent the wheel here as A Voice for Choice Advocacy has such a document. Now we are also at the point where we want to leave behind amendment ideas. A Voice for Choice Advocacy has created a document that outlines amendments. What I suggest is having a separate page

where you list your asks of the legislator and any other relevant information you want to share with your legislator.

All of these documents can be found here <https://avoiceforchoiceadvocacy.org/sb-276/>

Here are some suggestions:

- (1) Decline to co-author SB 276 (Pan).
- (2) Oppose SB 276 (Pan) and **if cannot oppose ABSTAIN from voting on SB 276**
- (3) A Voice for Choice Advocacy amendments**

If the legislator is with us and there are legislators they may have influence with (especially new ones) perhaps asking them to talk with them

Starting the meeting

Facilitator start the meeting thanking the legislator/staffer for their time and their work (bring up here recent bill and or area of interest that is in line with the group you are with). Bring talking points in whole or summarized to the staffer or legislator and so it is a guide to help follow along. This will also be one of the leave behind for the legislator/staffer. Everyone in the room should have the handout so everyone is on the same page when going through the talking points. Your role as facilitator is to line up who is speaking about each talking point so you know how to facilitate and transition the meeting.

Let the group go around and do brief introductions. Then go around the room sticking to your planned talking points in an orderly fashion. Keep an eye on timing as best you can for each person to make sure they don't go off tangent and you can help facilitate everyone's turn by trying to wait for a break or pause and then say something to the effect of, "And now we are going to hear about XXX from XXXX"

Ending the meeting

Thank the staffer or legislator for their time. Be sure to get business cards from the staffer especially

Follow up

Always follow up with them after thanking them again via email sending them again materials.

Question you don't know the answer to

If a question comes up that you do not know the answer to, say you will follow up with the staffer or legislator AND THEN DO!

Pitfalls

If you have someone go rogue start to go off on a tangent or start to dive into areas you had not intended they dive into try as best you can to bring it back. This is an emotional topic and for some they truly find it difficult to speak rationally without emotional outbursts or going off on tangents about topics not relevant to your talking points for this specific bill we are addressing. If you are able to deal with these issues before a meeting the better. Maybe that individual needs to just sit there and not speak and just represent being a constituent at the meeting. Maybe this is not a forum that person can do well in and they can chose something else to show their activism. But it can happen that you do not expect it and explosions happen in a meeting. Try to maneuver as best you can and transition to the next person.

Subject areas to avoid

Would avoid re litigating SB 277 as it will not help us, we lost that battle and this one with SB 276 is a new one with new issues. In short, making your meeting entirely about vaccines, vaccine injury and vaccine data is not the way to approach a meeting on SB 276.

What appeals to the self interest of a Democrat

Democrats' central theme is the state or government serving populations that need help or have been disenfranchised.

This historically has included the following groups:

Special needs/disability community (regional center, IHSS)

Elderly

Low income/poor/working class (SSI)

LGBT

Minority populations

Single parents (CalWorks program)

Immigrant population

They care about **access** to programs and services

They care about the whole group as opposed to the individual

Historically they have cared about freedom of speech and been opposed to censorship

Rights (Health rights are normally in terms of abortion rights or universal healthcare rights)

Buzz words they do not respond; alternative to use

Fundamental

Freedom (use rights)

Liberty

Constitutional

Parent (use family)

Medical (use health)

Golden Rules

We have to be perfect.

Always be or look reasonable.

I am willing to go to as many local meetings as I am needed at in the So California area. I can sit in support of you at the meeting or talk or whatever you need. Please also reach out if you have any questions or need any guidance. Email Educate Advocate educateadvocateca@educateadvocateca.com or call us 909 285 4269