MAKING THE CHC VOICE HEARD

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE THE VALUE OF CHCS WITH DECISION MAKERS
In many ways, a governor is able to act unilaterally, but . . .

legislators need to muster majorities (or be perceived to be able to) in order to exercise power.
LEGISLATIVE POWER

- Legislative leaders have limited power
- Legislators need each other to get things done
WHAT DO LEGISLATORS WANT?

• To do the right thing
• To get re-elected
• To advance policy goals
• To position themselves for a future leadership post or higher office
• To be respected
• Job satisfaction
HOW DO THEY ACCOMPLISH THESE?

- Building relationships with their peers
- Developing policy expertise
- Raising money
- Getting media attention
- Supporting their leadership
- Establishing a favorable reputation
- Listening to and helping their constituents
WHAT CHALLENGES DO THEY FACE?

- Demands on their time and attention
- Conflicting interests
- Competition for attention
- Defending their actions from opposition arguments
- Lack of information
CONSTITUENT CONTACT

IT DOESN’T TAKE MANY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE
Legislators don’t hear from their constituents as much as you may think. They hear frequently from . . .

- Lobbyists
- Fellow members
- Executive branch officials
- Members of the public who aren’t their constituents
CONSTITUENT CONTACT IS A TWO-WAY STREET

- Listening to and helping a constituent is an opportunity for legislators to advance goals
- Constituent expertise can help educate a legislator or connect to helpful resources
- Some of the most rewarding parts of the job come from helping constituents
HOW TO BE EFFECTIVE

• Identify yourself as a constituent
• Plan what you want to say, do your homework
• Speak from personal experience/expertise
• Keep it simple and repeat your points
• Be brief, allow for questions
• Have information to leave behind
• Offer to be available to speak again and/or connect them to more information
• Make an explicit ask
• Involve others
WHAT NOT TO DO

• Don’t take it personally if you don’t get an immediate response
• Don’t be adversarial or partisan
• Don’t give misinformation
BEST METHODS OF CONTACT

In preferred order:
• Face to face
• Voice to voice
• Handwritten correspondence
• Text message
• Email

IMPORTANT: Always follow-up with them to make sure they understand that you’re paying attention.
**WHAT’S THE CONTEXT IN AUGUSTA?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maine Senate</th>
<th>Maine House</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 Republicans</td>
<td>77 Democrats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Democrats</td>
<td>71 Republicans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 non-party</td>
</tr>
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CONTEXT: BIG ISSUES

- Income taxes
- Minimum wage
- MaineCare
- Public Health
- Mental Health
- Immigration
A WORD ON PROCESS

- All policy committees are joint house and senate
- Every bill gets a public hearing
- A single vote from committee guarantees the opportunity for a floor vote
- Most of what happens isn’t acrimonious or partisan