



Advocacy Handbook

Tips for Influencing Public Policy

Our Mission Statement

Florida Breast Cancer Foundation (FBCF) is a non-profit grassroots organization dedicated to ending of breast cancer through advocacy, education, and research.

Our purpose is to raise awareness and mobilize the population of Florida to ensure:

- Sufficient government and public funding for breast cancer research
- Quality health care for all without fear of discrimination
- An environment free of carcinogens

To achieve our mission, FBCF welcomes all who are committed to ending the breast cancer epidemic. We have made great strides, but much more needs to be done, especially here in Florida. We thank you in advance and depend on your involvement in the Florida Breast Cancer Foundation.

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Introduction

Florida Breast Cancer Foundation (FBCF) works statewide to raise awareness and mobilize Floridians to ensure sufficient public funding for breast cancer research, and quality health care for all without fear of discrimination in an environment free of carcinogens. We are the only organization in the State of Florida with the end breast cancer license plate. All monies raised stay in the State of Florida to support advocacy, education, and research programs for Florida residents and institutions. FBCF is dedicated to end breast cancer through education, advocacy, and research. One of the most effective tools we have is public policy advocacy. This means we work to change public policy and laws to accomplish our mission.

Our work in advocacy moves our concern for persons with breast cancer and their families out of our homes and into the offices of every Florida U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators.

To date the payoff has been phenomenal and with your help we have accomplished the following:

- Increased federal funds for research into many areas of breast cancer.
- Raised the awareness of policy makers and the general public about the real health care crisis – and the need to find a way to ensure quality health care for all.

You will see that most of the ideas in this handbook are simple, and common sense recommendations. Advocacy is not complicated or technical. The most important ingredient is you – your personal experiences, your commitment to help make a difference, and your willingness to communicate with your elected representatives.

The payoff is tremendous, both for what you can achieve and for the self-gratification you will receive from making a difference in the lives of those affected by breast cancer.

Welcome to the Florida Breast Cancer Foundation's Advocacy program!

WORKING TOGETHER FOR CHANGE

WHY?

- **Guaranteed Access to Quality Health Care for All:** In March 2010, the House and Senate passed and the President signed into law the health care reform package that reflects many of the elements and priorities set forth in National Breast Cancer Coalition's "Framework for a Health Care System Guaranteeing Access to Quality Health Care for All". To increase funding to find the causes of breast cancer and treatment for breast cancer.
- **\$150 million dollars for FY11 for the Department of Defense Peer Reviewed Breast Cancer Research Program:** As a result of FBCF and NBCC's advocacy and strong bipartisan leadership on Capitol Hill, more than \$2 billion has been invested in this competitive peer-reviewed research program. This innovative program has changed the world of breast cancer research. The inclusion of advocates in every aspect of decision-making and the program's unique grant opportunities have led to groundbreaking scientific advances. To assure adequate, appropriate, and affordable health care for all dealing with breast cancer an annual reminder is provided to all members of the U.S. House and Senate.

ADVOCACY WORKS:

Through our growing advocacy efforts we have already achieved many breakthroughs. FBCF has:

- Assisted in securing over 800 million dollars in federal funding for breast cancer research.
- Created a specialty "End Breast Cancer" license plate with proceeds going to breast cancer research and education in the state of Florida. In 16 years the plate has generated over \$3.3 million.
- Played an instrumental role in having the Mary Brogan Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Act passed in Florida.

OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM NEEDS CITIZEN PARTICIPATION TO WORK!

The strength of our advocacy effort is rooted in the thousands of individuals and families who can be active in public policy activities, both locally and at the National level.

Become an FBCF Advocate

The key to the FBCF's effectiveness is our grassroots volunteer advocates. Our organization has a standing advocacy committee and many opportunities to be an active volunteer, both locally and statewide, in advocacy. Get involved!

- **Become a FBCF member-** an annual investment of \$50.00 will ensure you receive Welcome packet, E-mail Action Alerts, E-Newsletters, notice of FBCF-sponsored education and training opportunities and special events, networking opportunities at the Annual Advocacy and Education Conference, Power of Pink Breakfast and Shades of Pink, one complimentary ticket to our annual Shades of Pink Event, and also make you eligible to apply for the Jane Torres scholarships.
- **Join the advocacy committee!**
- **Speakers Bureau:** volunteer to help motivate and educate others about advocacy. Training will be provided by FBCF.
- **Fact Gathering:** Do phone, library, and legwork to assist the advocacy committee in developing positions or legislation.
- **Issue Coordinating:** Under the direction of the Committee Chair, research and analyze possible strategies and tactics to move a particular legislative proposal or issue forward.
- **Writing:** Write articles on advocacy for the monthly FBCF newsletter.
- **Phone Banking:** Volunteer to call local group leaders, partner organizations, and FBCF members to remind them to participate in upcoming events or respond to issues.
- **Attending NBCC's National Advocacy Conference** and Lobby Day in Washington DC.
- **Participating in a coalition:** Represent FBCF in a local coalition, a diverse group of organizations working together on an issue

(such as quality health care for all). Contact FBCF for contacts in your area.

- **Recruit New Advocates** from your local areas. This is a key activity to grow our statewide network and also to provide larger and larger numbers of participants at our annual Lobby Day in Washington D.C., representing the state of Florida.
- **Create your own job:** Make a suggestion to the advocacy chair about what you want to do or can do best.

Action E-ALERTS

WHAT?

FBCF operates an electronic action alert system designed to bring our grassroots advocacy network to life.

WHY?

FBCF uses E-ALERTS to generate constituent phone calls, letters, and emails to a federal or state elected official when he or she is about to make a decision on one of our key policy issues regarding breast cancer.

TIPS:

- Act immediately. E-ALERTS require a quick and timely response.
- Messages based on E-ALERTS can be sent by letter, phone call or email.
- Say exactly what you want (e.g. Support quality health care for all regardless of ability to pay, House Bill....). Ask for a commitment!
- Be personal. Explain what the bill or proposal will mean to you and your family and others like you in our community.
- Ask your family, friends, co-workers, fellow congregants, and support group members to send a message, too.

WRITING TO AN ELECTED OFFICIAL

WHY? State and federal legislators pay close attention to their mail. Letters are one important way for them to know whether an issue matters to the people they represent. The volume of letters a public official receives on an issue can affect the way he/she votes. One letter will make a difference!

TIPS:

- Write a personal letter. It is much more effective than a standard form letter. Tell your own story about how the issue affects you, your family, or your community.
- Identify yourself as a constituent and/or a member of the Florida Breast Cancer Foundation.
- Identify the bill number or issue on which you want action in the first paragraph of your letter, and state what action you want.
- Try to say it in one page (two pages at most) and be sure your return address is legible.
- Ask a question in your letter. By doing so, you show that you expect to continue the dialogue with the elected official.
- Always be polite and persuasive (never rude or argumentative).
- Send a copy of your letter with a CC: to FBCF so we can track the legislator's response and that they know we are following the issue.

To write to a Member of Congress:

The Honorable _____
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable _____
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator _____,

Dear Congress(man/woman) _____,

To write to a Governor or State Legislator:

The Honorable
State House, Room _____
Tallahassee, FL

Dear Representative/Senator/Governor

CALLING AN ELECTED OFFICIAL

Why? Elected officials and other governmental decision makers pay attention when citizens, especially “their” constituents, take the time to call or write to express their views on an issue. It may be quicker and easier to call rather than to write, especially if an issue is moving fast. It may be the only way to get your message through in time to make a meaningful impact.

TIPS:

- Prepare your remarks before you call.
- Don’t be surprised or put off if you don’t speak to the official directly. Staff who answer or respond to the majority of constituent calls have the official’s “ear” and will see that your comments are recorded and passed on.
- Identify yourself as a constituent.
- Say exactly what you are calling about (bill number, issue, etc.)
- Say what you want the official to do, such as vote against a budget cut.
- Leave your name, address, and phone number.
- Be positive and avoid debating at length.
- Calling local offices of federal or state officials is fine, but calling their capitol office carries more weight.
- Call the Governor and “weigh in” on an issue or on a particular vote.

VISITING AN ELECTED OFFICIAL

WHY? Person-to-person visits are the most effective way of letting a public official know about you, you're issues, and FBCF.

TIPS:

- Do your homework on the issues and on the person with whom you will meet (such as the person's committee assignment). Know ahead of time what you want to say and stick to the point.
- Lead with your own personal story. Let the official know what breast cancer has meant to you.
- Go with a group. Develop a plan. Assign a group spokesperson and assign the order of speaking. Practice through a role play first, if possible.
- If you meet with an aide and not a legislator, don't panic. Legislative aides are the eyes and ears of their bosses. They will communicate your message.
- Visit state and federal legislators in their district offices, whenever possible. They are often more relaxed and receptive when they are away from the capitol.
- Keep it simple, direct, upbeat, and most importantly brief!
- Have a condensed version of your key points (2 minutes) ready for a wrap up or in case you're meeting time gets cut.
- Policy makers expect to be asked for assistance. Always make a specific request for support and leave them with an action item.
- Bring a fact sheet outlining your basic message, with details on how to reach you. Include information about FBCF. Press kits are always available by calling our offices: 1.877.644.3222.
- Always write a thank you note, sending requested information, or otherwise following up on any interest or commitments expressed by the official or aide in your meeting.

INFLUENCING THE MEDIA

WHY? Media increases visibility for issues, influences public opinion, and can create the actions of the public officials. Making the case for a position on a bill or issue in any of the various media adds pressure upon public officials to act on issues. Above all, there are several ways that individual advocates can get their point of view into the media.

TIPS:

- One way to get a point of view across is to write a letter to the editor of your local paper. These are often some of the most watched parts of local media by legislators and other elected officials.
- If you write a letter to the editor, be concise, be timely, and above all, don't assume that readers know jargon, buzz words, and any of the issue(s).
- Carefully follow instructions for submitting letters to the editor described in the individual publication on the editorial page.
- Call in to a local radio talk show. If an issue, like health care reform is being discussed explain how breast cancer fits into that in a broader context.
- Make yourself available for speaking to the media about your personal experience with the disease through the FBCF's speaker's bureau.
- Work with FBCF's marketing committee to help build and maintain the FBCF press list and do press calls to follow-up on press releases and statements regarding public policy issues.

GLOSSARY OF LEGISLATIVE TERMS

Act	Legislation that has been passed by a legislative body and signed into law by the executive.
Advocate	Literally, “one who is a voice on behalf of another”; public policy volunteer.
Aide	An assistant to a public official. (Also “staff”, “staffer”)
Amendment	The proposal by a member of a legislature to alter the wording of a bill under consideration.
Appropriation	Legislation that directs the spending of public funds for a specific program, agency or other purpose authorized by law.
Authorization	An act that creates or extends a program.
Bicameral	A legislature consisting of two houses.
Bill	A proposed law that is introduced to a legislative body.
Calendar	A listing of items for action by a committee or house of a legislative body; public document.
Caucus	An informal meeting of a group of members of a legislative body; sometimes convened based on interest or party affiliation (as in Elder Caucus)
Committee	A sub-group of a legislative body permanently established by rules to consider and report legislation and to monitor the implementation of programs enacted; organized by subject area, as in Health and Welfare Committee.
Conference Committee	A meeting between members of the House and Senate to iron out a compromise between different versions of a bill. Once

a compromise is worked out, the conference report is voted upon and sent on to the Executive for approval.

Convene	To assemble, call together a meeting.
Ex Officio	The holding of one office by virtue of holding another; for example, the Lieutenant Governor of California is ex officio a member of the Board of Regents.
Fiscal Impact	The effect of a proposal upon a budget.
Floor	A colloquialism describing the interior meeting room of a legislative body; matters before the body are referred to as “on the floor” or “going to the floor”
Hearing	A committee meeting where testimony is taken from witnesses about an issue or specific bill.
Initiative	A proposal put directly before voters, by passing the legislative process.
Joint Resolution	A measure offered in one house and agreed to by the other.
Journal	The official chronological record of proceedings. (Also “Digest”, “Record”)
Lobbyist	A person paid to represent the interests of a group to a governmental body.
Mark-Up	The process by which a subcommittee revises legislation. Once completed, the measure is ready for debate. (Also “Draft”)
Officers	That portion of the legislature elected by its members to serve in positions of authority, such as Speaker of the House. (Also “Leadership”)
Passage	Favorable action on a measure.
Quorum	The number of members required to be present before business can be transacted.

Reading	The presentation of a bill before either house by reading the title thereof; a stage in the enactment of a bill.
Referendum	The method by which a measure adopted by a legislature may be submitted to popular vote.
Rules	The methods of procedure adopted by a body for its own governance.
Session	The period during which a legislature meets, set by each state's constitution.
Skeleton Bill	In some states, a measure introduced in outline form, substance to be added at a later date.
Table	A motion to delay matters indefinitely. (Also "postpone")
Unicameral	A legislature consisting of one house, such as in Nebraska or a city or county council.
Veto	The Executive's formal disapproval of legislation. A bill can become law if an override vote is successful in each house of the legislature. In Congress, this requires a two-thirds majority.