



How to Advocate Like A Texan

Nora Belcher, Executive Director
Texas e-Health Alliance
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Background- Nora Belcher

- 20+ years in public policy with an emphasis on health care technology
- Senior leadership roles in Texas Medicaid and the Governor's Office
- Involved in starting the SXSW Health and MedTech Expo
- Won computer programming contest in the 1980s and still has the trophies

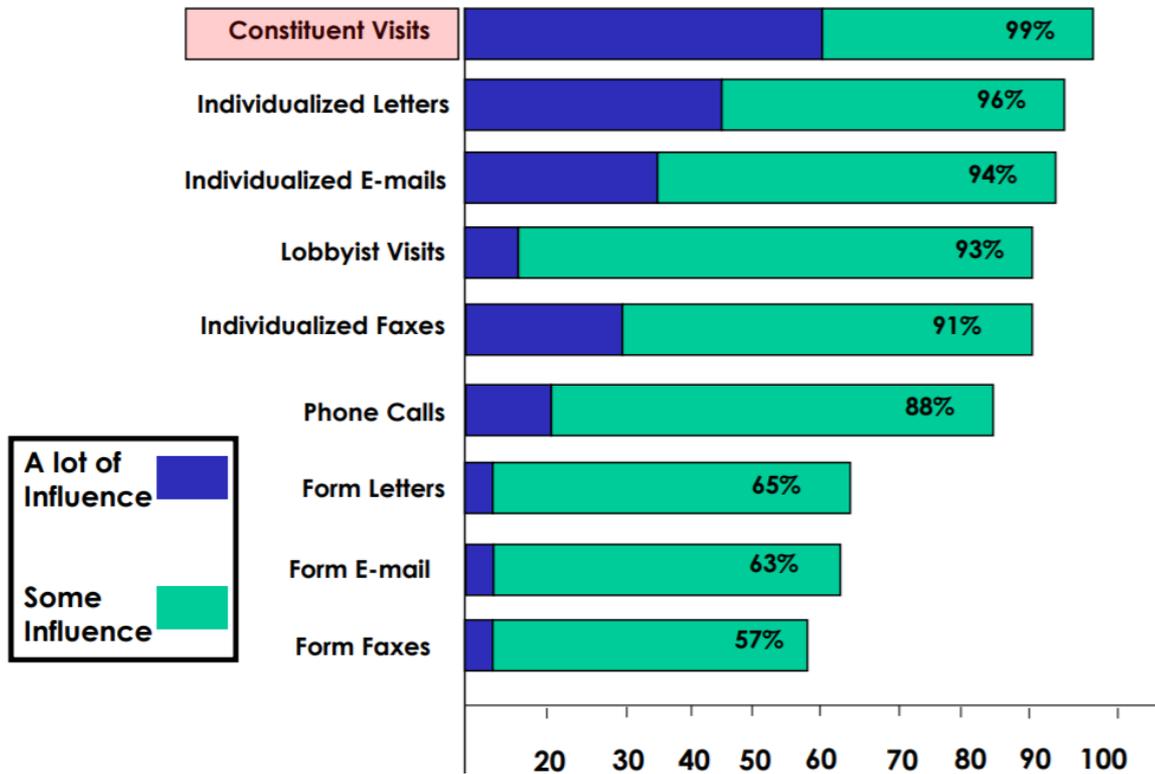
What is the Texas e-Health Alliance?

- State's leading advocate, from local communities to the national level, for the use of health information technology to improve the health system for patients
- 501(c)6 non-profit started in 2009
- Serves as a trade association for HIT companies
 - As such, cannot recommend or endorse specific products

Abstract

- Effective advocacy frequently includes mobilizing an organization's grassroots membership to visit with legislators while they are in session. This can be a useful tool in educating legislators on issues, raising the visibility of specific topics, and conveying the impact of pending legislation on a legislator's home district. In this session, Nora Belcher, executive director of the Texas e-Health Alliance, will share stories from her two decades of experience at the Texas Capitol, provide tips on how to be an effective advocate, and give insight into how grassroots visits can be effective advocacy tools.

The Importance of In-Person Meetings (Source: Congressional Management Foundation)



- **Why am I going?**
- What am I going to say?
- How do I get ready?
- What do I do once I'm there?
- What should I NOT do?
- What do I do when it's over?

Why am I going?

- Start with the goal in mind:
 - Influence or education?
 - Creating a new law or repealing an old one?
 - Is the other side showing up?
 - Offense vs. defense
 - Is money needed?
 - Where are you in the legislative cycle?
 - Interims vs. sessions

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What am I going to say?

- Pick your battles
- Identify the main messages and summarize
- Frame the discussion
 - specific problem and proposed solution
 - Do you need help figuring this out? That's ok too
- Make it personal
 - How does this impact their district?

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How do I get ready?

- Be completely up to speed on the topic
 - State and national developments
 - Recent committee/floor discussions and votes
- Know the context
 - Is there legislative history?
 - What's the member's voting record? (this may not be the same as their opinion)
 - Are there opponents?
 - How does this impact their district and voters?

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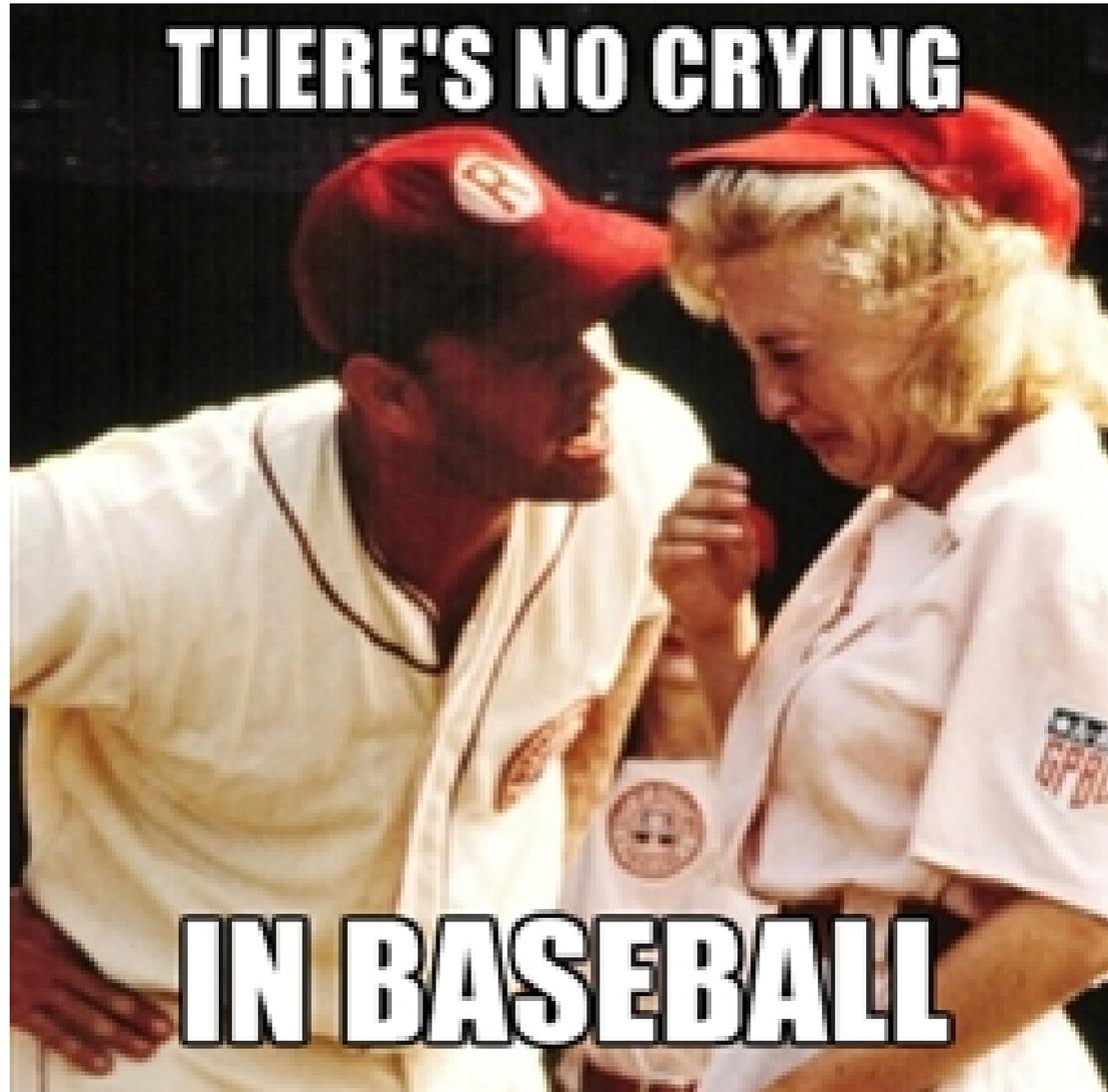
What do I do once I'm there?

- Introduce yourself and give context.
- Be positive and polite (to staff, too).
- Be flexible and respect their time.
- Be specific/tie it to their district.
- Use personal anecdotes.
- Ask how you can help them.
- Say thank you.
- SHORT leave behinds only (1 page)

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- **What should I NOT do?**
- What do I do when it's over?

What should I NOT do?

- Don't be close minded.
- Don't confuse opinions with voting records.
- Don't be argumentative or confrontational.
- Don't be overly technical.
- Don't lose track of time.
- Don't make threats.
- **DON'T CRY.**



- Why am I going?
- What am I going to say?
- How do I get ready?
- What do I do once I'm there?
- What should I NOT do?
- **What do I do when it's over?**

What do I do when it's over?

- Say thank you for the visit- in writing.
- Emailing materials is good too (but not too much).
- If you promised to follow up, follow up!
- Track your topic- if it comes up for a vote and the member you visited with votes your way, use that as an opportunity to touch base and say thank you.



Questions?

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