

LOBBYING 101

A PRESENTATION FOR OHIO ADOPTION PLANNING GROUP

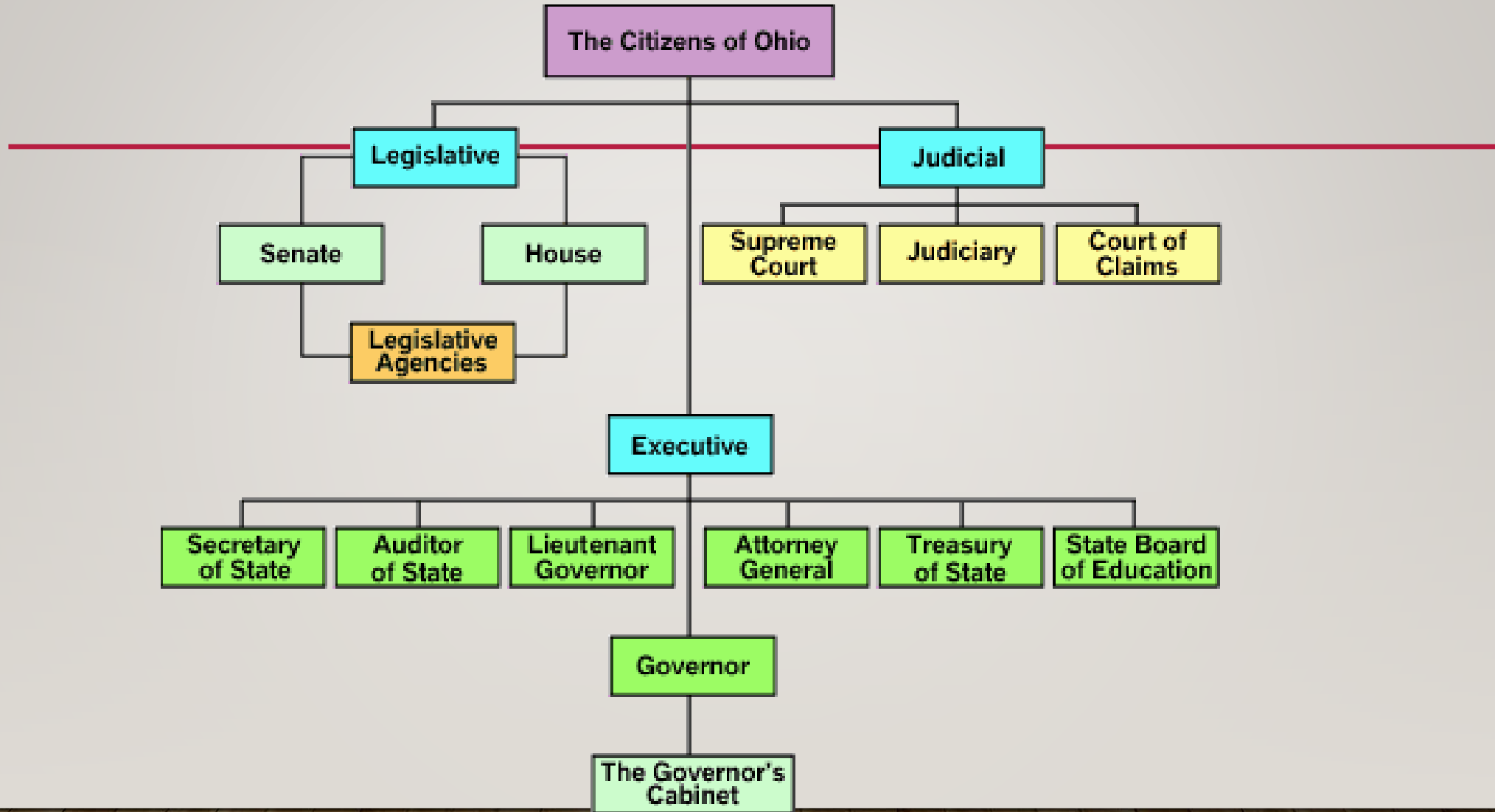
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GOALS

- Understand the basics of the State of Ohio Government
- Understand “grassroots, grasstops and direct” lobbying techniques
- Discuss OAPG’s specific legislative issues
- Don’t bore you to death

State of Ohio Organizational Chart



ADVOCACY SUMMARIZED...

- “A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty”-Winston Churchill

GOVERNOR/ADMINISTRATION



Mike DeWine



LeeAnne Cornyn



Kimberly Hall

OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

- 99 Members
- 61 Republicans
- 38 Democrats
- New Speaker
- Very fractured



Larry Householder

OHIO SENATE

- 33 Members
- 24 Republicans
- 9 Democrats
- Controlled by Republicans since 1984
- Considered more stable than House



Larry Obhof

QUICK PRIMER ON OHIO BUDGET

- Biennial budget
- Passed in odd years
- This year must be introduced by Governor by March 15
- Process must be completed by July 1
- Governor introduces, House passes, Senate passes, conference committee, Governor signs

GRASSROOTS DEFINED

- “The common or ordinary people, especially as contrasted with the leadership or elite of a political organization.”
- Who is this for OAPG?
 - Social workers?
 - Clients?

PURPOSE OF GRASSROOTS EFFORTS

- To influence public policy in favor of a common interest
- To provide real life experience
- To create uniformity of message and organizational cohesiveness

IMPORTANCE OF GRASSROOTS

- GOVERNMENT WILL ACT, BUT WILL IT ACT FOR OR AGAINST OUR INTERESTS?
- Government is reactionary. It sees the bad and then reacts. This tends to lead to overregulation and unintended consequences. We must be ready to explain the consequences of regulation to policy makers.

WHAT GOES INTO A GRASSROOTS PLAN?

- Identify and agree upon goal (create awareness of issue, pass bill, kill bill)
- Identify key targets
 - Legislators
 - Governor/cabinet director
 - Local Governments
- Identify and understand timeframe for implementation
 - Is this an urgent call to action?
 - Is this an ongoing effort?
 - Will there be additional follow up once contact is made with the key targets?

WHAT GOES INTO A GRASSROOTS PLAN (CONT.)

- Decide on message
 - Must align with goals of the campaign
 - Must be consistent with slight modifications for individual targets
 - Must be easily digested by targets and easily delivered by your members
 - Ideally it can be delivered in multiple ways (email, phone call, snail mail)
 - Should always identify an action for the target to take (vote for, vote against, etc.)

GRASSTOPS DEFINED

- **Grasstops** are activists or members of an organization or geographic area that have a high professional and/or public profile, may be part of the “political family” for a decision maker, and can raise public attention or influence decision makers through established connections.

WHO ARE GRASSTOPS FOR OAPG?

- County commissioners?
- Agency heads?
- JFS Directors?

MANAGING A GRASSTOPS CAMPAIGN

- Compliments a grassroots campaign
- Mechanics are the same, just utilizing different assets
 - Letters, calls, emails, etc.

DIRECT LOBBYING

- A face-to-face meeting with an elected representative, or a key member of their staff is the best way to teach them about your concerns and, ideally, help shape their views.
- Don't feel you are imposing, legislators meet with constituents and interest groups daily.
- Legislators depend on you for support just as you depend on them. Speaking with constituents is a key opportunity for them.

STEP 1: ARRANGING THE VISIT

- Don't just drop in. Schedule 2-3 weeks in advance through the secretary in the Columbus office.
- Don't ask to meet for more than half an hour. You will probably get 10 to 15 minutes.
- Explain the reason for the visit: Meet and greet? Specific issue or piece of legislation? Request for assistance? Identify who will be attending.

Arranging the Visit - Continued



- Depending on legislative developments, it may be necessary to meet with staff rather than the legislator. Don't express disappointment should this occur.
- Staff members are vital gatekeepers; they must be cultivated. They can provide you with access and, if they are sympathetic with your position, can become a trusted voice in the ear of the legislator. If your legislator decides to adopt one of your causes, it is the staff who will do much of the work.
- **Confirm the visit by letter or email** soon after arranging the appointment, and then **again by phone** the previous day.

STEP 2: PREPARING FOR THE VISIT – DO YOUR HOMEWORK

- If you're going as a group, agree on your message beforehand. Show a united front, divisiveness is both irritating and confusing.
- Have well-reasoned facts and figures on your issue(s) ready, but do not be overwhelming. Be ready to answer questions and (when necessary) respond to counter-arguments made by your opponents. Don't be afraid to say you don't know, but will get back to the legislator with needed information.
- Agree on the goal of the meeting. Is it to educate the member on adoption or foster care? Is it to urge them to support a bill? Is it to urge them to kill a bill?

Preparing for the Visit (Cont.)

- Be sure that all participants in the meeting are familiar with the legislator's political affiliation, the extent of his/her district, his/her committee assignments, number of terms served, voting record, and/or position, on the issue(s). Be aware of what the legislator did before he/she was a member of the General Assembly – often they were local officials/agency heads. This will help you gauge their knowledge of your issue.
 - The state House and Senate websites contain bios of all members.
 - <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/>

STEP 3: DURING THE VISIT (ARRIVE ON TIME, EVEN A LITTLE EARLY).

- Be on time, positive, friendly.
- Know your agenda and stick to your message.
- Don't assume the legislator is familiar with the details of the issue/bill.
- Take notes during the visit which will provide a written summary.
- Be alert to staff members assigned to work in this area. Ask them for a card so you can follow up with them.

Step 3: During the Visit - Continued

- Make your presentation simple and straightforward. You may have only 5 or 10 minutes left by the time you get through with introductions and pleasantries.
- Feel free to initiate the discussion. Don't wait for the legislator to begin the conversation.
- Be responsive to your legislator's questions. If you don't know the answer to a question, don't fake it or bluff. Say "I don't know, but I'll get back to you on it." Then DO IT.
- Don't overstay your welcome. Conclude the visit by again extending the appropriate thank you. Reaffirm your intention to forward any information or materials which was **requested by the legislator**.

STEP 4: FOLLOWING THE VISIT

ALWAYS DEBRIEF AS A GROUP IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS

- Personal visits always increase a legislator's awareness of an issue. However, the effectiveness of such a visit increases markedly when accompanied by follow-up actions.
- Send a **thank-you note** or letter which reinforces your message and the local impact, restates an understanding of the legislator's position, highlights the main points of the visit, and concludes with a personal story which surfaced during the conversation. It should also provide the member with any additional materials or information she/he may have requested.
- If the visit was held with a staff member, still address the letter to the legislator with a copy (cc) to the staff member.

OAPG FUNDING ISSUE

- Definitely a budget issue
- Key contacts:
 - LeeAnne Cornyn, Governor's Office
 - Dan McCarthy, Governor's Director of Legislative Affairs (he has worked with PCSAO!)
 - Kim Hall, JFS Director
 - Molly Rafeld, JFS Legislative Affairs
 - House Finance Chair/Staff (Christine Morrison)
 - Senate Finance Chair/Staff (Ray DiRossi)

OAPG FUNDING ISSUE (CONT.)

- Utilize all three lobbying methods!
 - Have key community leaders begin outreach to legislators
 - Encourage clients, employees of agencies, etc. to reach out as well
 - Meet with Governor's Office and JFS...yesterday!
 - Schedule meetings with key legislators and staff (members of Finance Committee and Leadership)

CONCLUSION

- You CAN do this! You can be an effective voice for change, making the lives of countless Ohioans better through your efforts.
- Don't be scared to get engaged, but always remember:

“Politics is supposed to be the second oldest profession. I have come to realize that it bears a very close resemblance to the first.”

- Ronald Reagan

- Questions??

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