

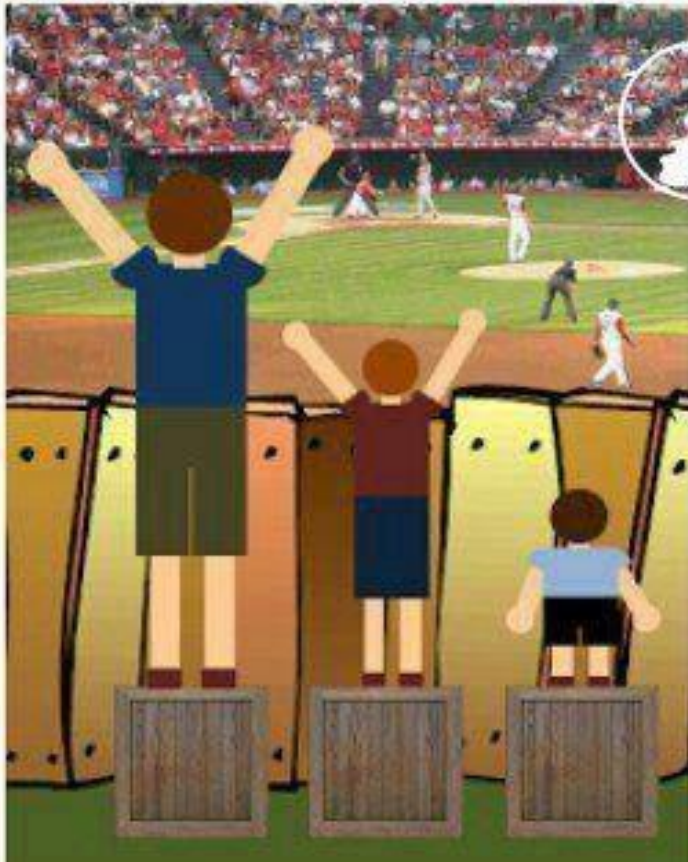
Policy Advocacy 101:

What You Need To Know to Influence Public Policy on Behalf of Children and Families

Who We Are

- Michigan's Children is a statewide, independent voice for children and their families. We work with lawmakers, business leaders, and communities to make Michigan a place where all children have the opportunity to thrive.
- We strive to be a trusted, nonpartisan voice working to reduce disparities in child outcomes from cradle to career through public policy change.

Equality



Equity



Policy In Context

- **Minimal movement in education outcomes, which is impacted by many factors including:**
 - Growing child and family poverty
 - Growing abuse and neglect
 - Minimal movement in child health outcomes

Why the Disconnect?

- Lots of competition for fewer dollars
 - Deficit budget for more than a decade
 - Recent revenue bright spots resulting in challenge and opportunity
- Ideology about the role of government
 - Polarization of the parties
- Policymakers don't hear about issues of concern

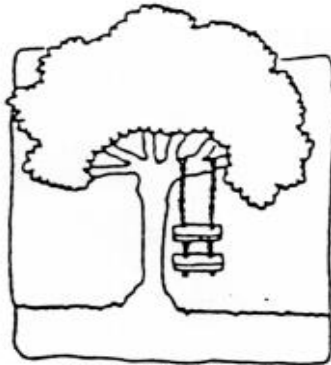
Becoming a Voice For Your Cause

- Moving concerns into ACTION
- Using influence for CHANGE
- Changing Attitudes and Behavior

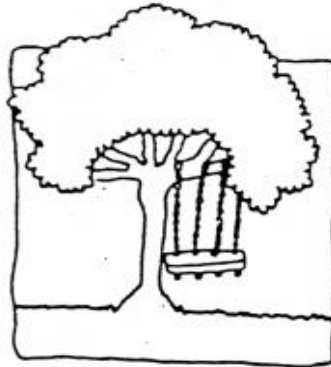
Why Get Involved/Why Advocacy

- You Can
 - You already have the skills you need
 - It doesn't take that many of us
- You Should
 - There are things we want changed
 - Democracy=Responsibility
 - Decision-makers REALLY need our help

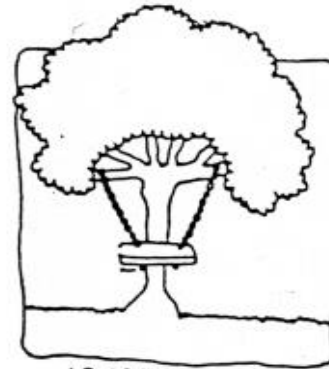
How a Bill Becomes Law



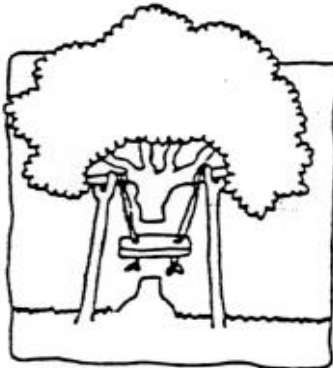
AS INTRODUCED



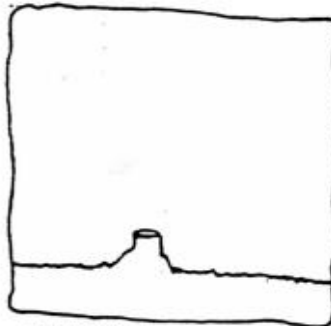
AS AMENDED IN
COMMITTEE



AS AMENDED ON
SECOND READING



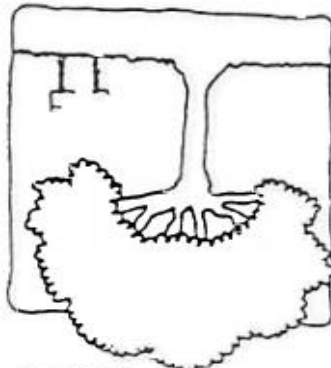
AS ENACTED



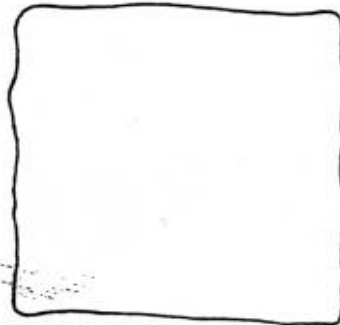
AS FUNDED BY JOINT
BUDGET COMMITTEE



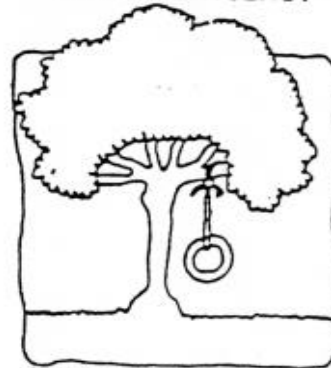
AS IMPLEMENTED BY
THE STATE AGENCY



AS REPORTED BY THE
MEDIA



AS UNDERSTOOD BY
THE PUBLIC



WHAT WAS ACTUALLY
NEEDED

How do we make change?

- **Get the attention of the people who can make the change you want**
- Talk to Decision-Makers
 - A concern that you have about your life
 - A concern that you have about their work
- Talk to Other People
 - About an issue
 - About policymaker's views or positions
 - About how to act

What You Need to Know

- WHAT we are talking about – the issues
- WHO can give us what we want – the players
- WHEN to target them – the process
- HOW to get them to listen – the message

Know the Issues

- We Know the Issues
- We Are Experts in Life and Work
- Solution as important as the problem

Know the Players

- Who can make the change
- What influences them
- Who Do We Know
- Who Do We Need

What Influences You?

Who/What Influences Decision Makers

- Friends
- Title or position
- Information
- Numbers
- Constituents
- Money

“When you need a friend, it’s too late to make one.”

Mark Twain

Who Do We Need?

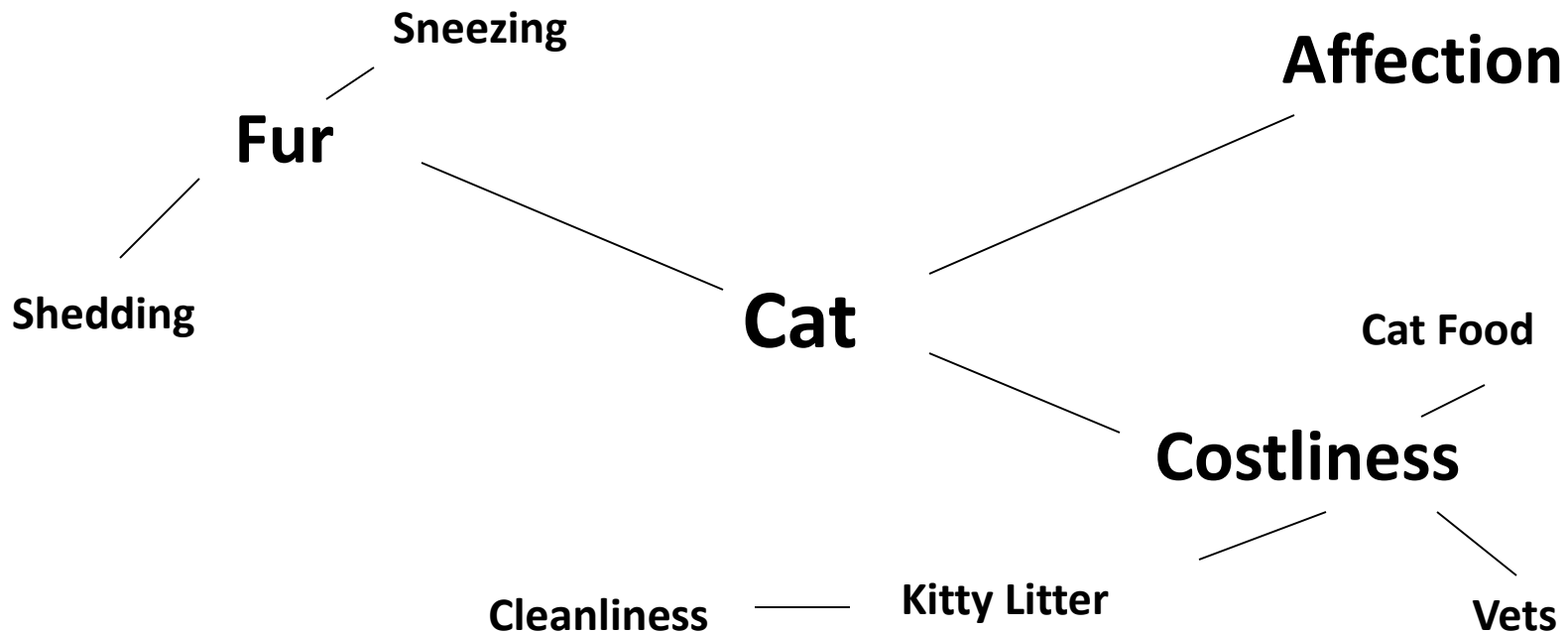
- Relationships
- Information Partners
 - Researchers, Evaluators
- Titled Partners
 - Experts, Professionals
- Constituent Partners
 - Based on Geography and Experience

How Do We Get Them to Listen?

- We use mental shortcuts to make sense of the world
- Based on our life experiences, including the media
- We use “frames” to filter new information



Cat Frame



Why Do Frames Matter?

When the facts don't fit the frame, it is the FACTS that are rejected, not the frame.

How To Find Their Frame

- **Get to Know Them!**
- Simple Research
- Paying Attention
- TALK TO THEM

Four Critical Numbers

- 2500: Different piece of legislation to be considered EACH YEAR
- 10-20%: Voters who contact elected officials
- 12: Phone calls needed to get attention
- 1: Enough to start or stop a discussion

Civics 101

- The Clock is Always Ticking
- Always Looking for a Majority
- Two-party System – Majority in Power
- Bi-Cameral Legislature
- The Governor

How a Bill Becomes a Law

- Bills are introduced
- They are discussed by each chamber
 - Majority party controls the agenda
 - If both agree
- They are presented to the Governor
 - Veto power

How Do We Get Involved

- Generate an idea
- Help write it down
- Get it discussed by policymakers
- Talk to committee members
- Make sure your elected officials support it
- Convince the administration to support it

Democracy in Action

- Four tools for communication

- Letters/e-mails – 1 page

- Phone calls – 3 minutes

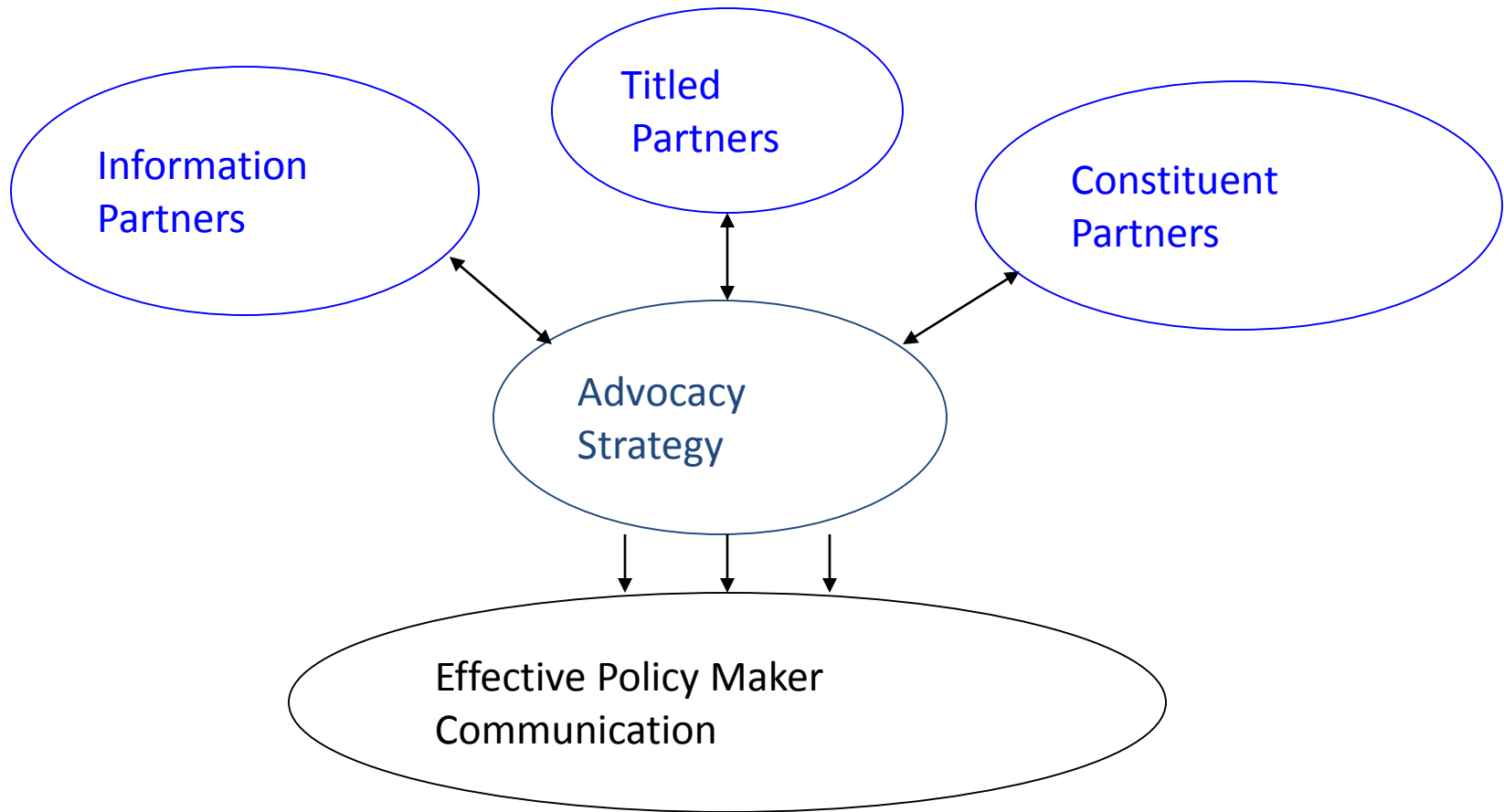
- Visits – 10-20 minutes

THEY CAN AND SHOULD VISIT YOU TOO!

- Testimony – 3-5 minutes

- Be brief and focused, but be sure they hear you

Successful Advocacy



Always Keep the Door Open

- If they don't do what you want...
 - Can you blame them? Did they know what you know?
 - Express disappointment, but look for other possibilities
- If all else fails...
 - Don't get angry
 - Get a better person elected/appointed/hired

The Elections

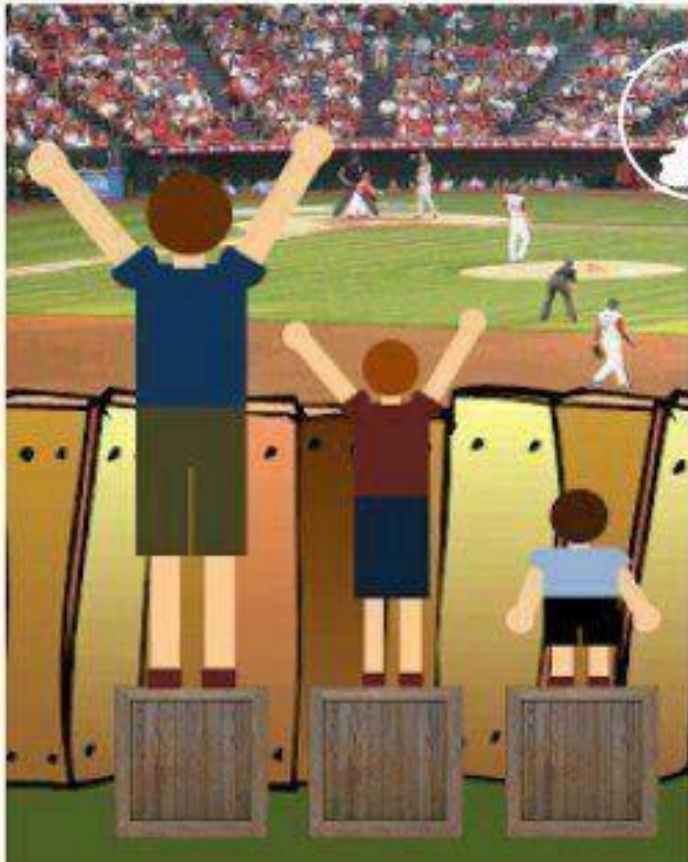
- Get to know the candidates
- Educate the candidates on the issues that matter to you.
- Educate local voters on candidates' positions. Better yet, invite candidates to community meetings and to visit local programs.
- Vote
- Stay engaged after the elections are over.

Influencing the State Budget

The state budget, as the single most powerful expression of the state's priorities, is a powerful tool for either improving equity or widening gaps.

Funding decisions that do not explicitly address underlying inequities in resource and opportunity will lead to larger disparities in child and family outcomes and longer-term fiscal hardships for all Michigan residents

Equality



Equity



Michigan Budget Process

- May– January: State Departments Submitted Recommendations
- February: Governor Releases Budget Recommendations
- February – June: Legislative Committee Action
- Mid-May: Final Revenue Estimating Conference
- June: Final Budget Signed by Governor

ONGOING: Talk to Legislators about budget issues – impact of budget cuts; innovative local practice that needs more support.

AFTER June: Talk to legislators about what you were happy or unhappy about in the state budget so they can be aware of what you would like to see in the following fiscal year budget.

Partner with Michigan's Children

- Sign-up for our electronic communications
- Be a local constituent Michigan's Children can rely on for personal outreach to policymakers
- Engage in Michigan's Children's youth voice events
- Other opportunities



*Public policy
in the best interest
of children.*

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