

Celebrate Babies Through Advocacy!

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

Mina Hong
October 20, 2016



*Public policy
in the best interest
of children.*

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.



Policy In Context

- **Minimal movement in child and family outcomes, which is impacted by many factors including:**
 - Stagnant child and family poverty
 - Growing abuse and neglect
 - Minimal movement in child health outcomes
 - *Lack of support for infants and toddlers*

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

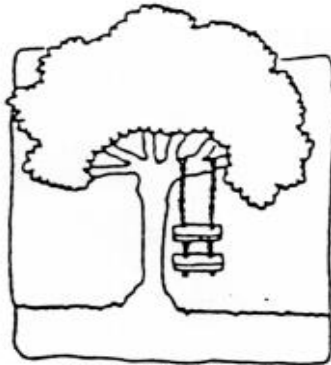
Becoming a Voice For Your Cause

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

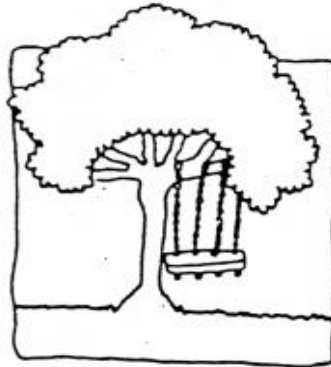
Why Get Involved/Why Advocacy

- 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

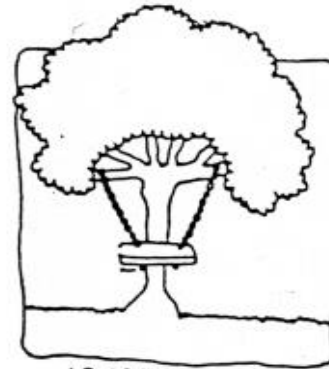
How a Bill Becomes Law



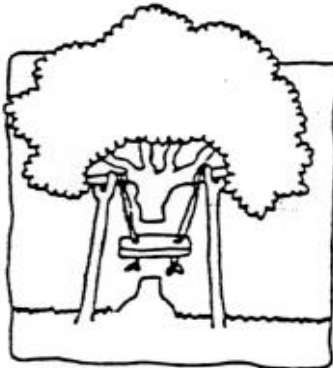
AS INTRODUCED



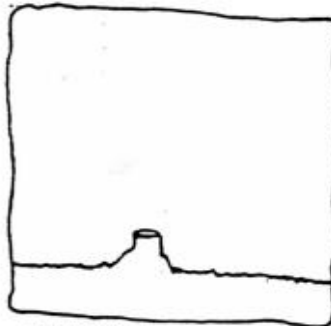
AS AMENDED IN
COMMITTEE



AS AMENDED ON
SECOND READING



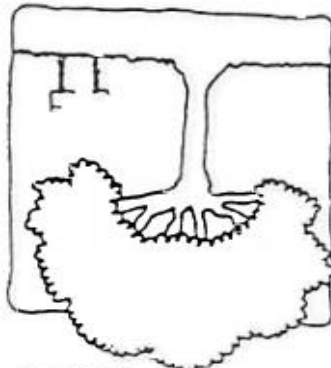
AS ENACTED



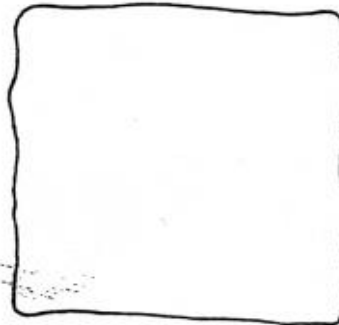
AS FUNDED BY JOINT
BUDGET COMMITTEE



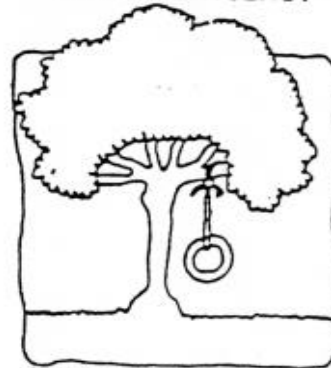
AS IMPLEMENTED BY
THE STATE AGENCY



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?

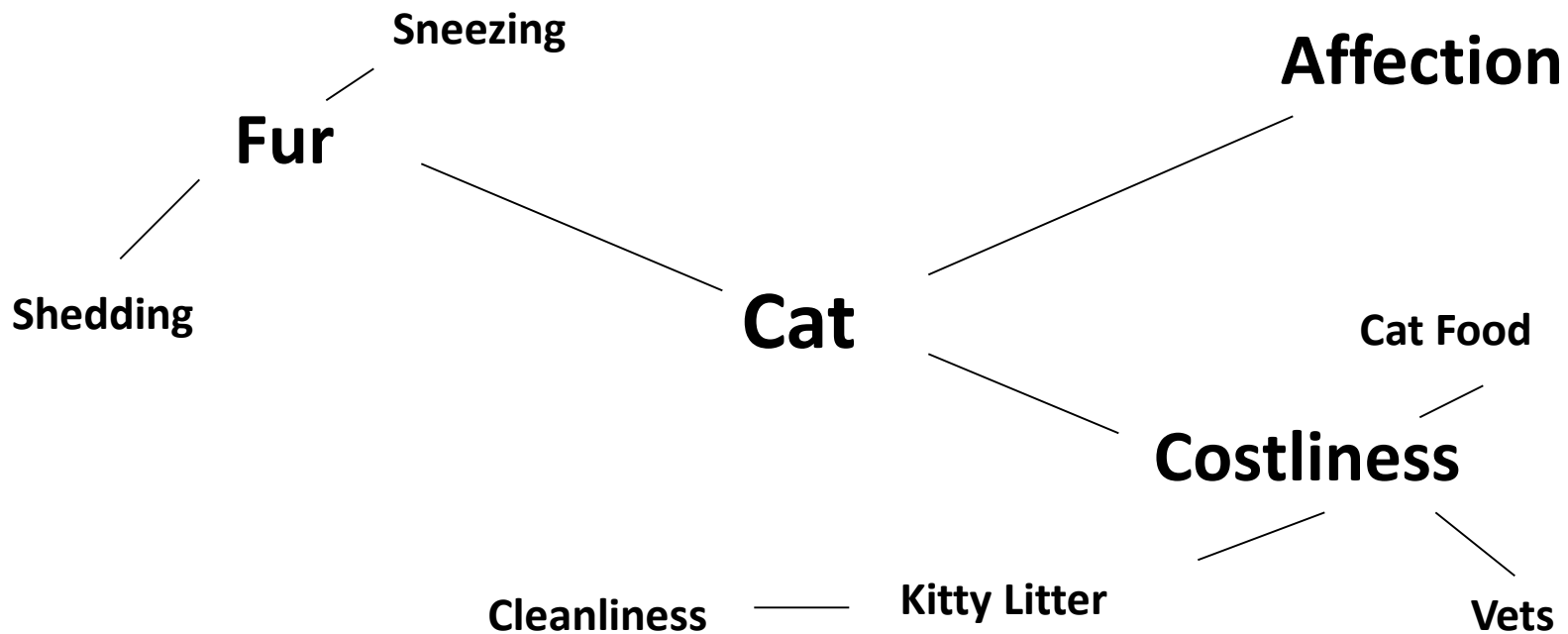
- Relationships
- Information Partners
 - Researchers, Evaluators
- Titled Partners
 - Experts, Professionals
- Constituent Partners
 - Based on Geography and Experience

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

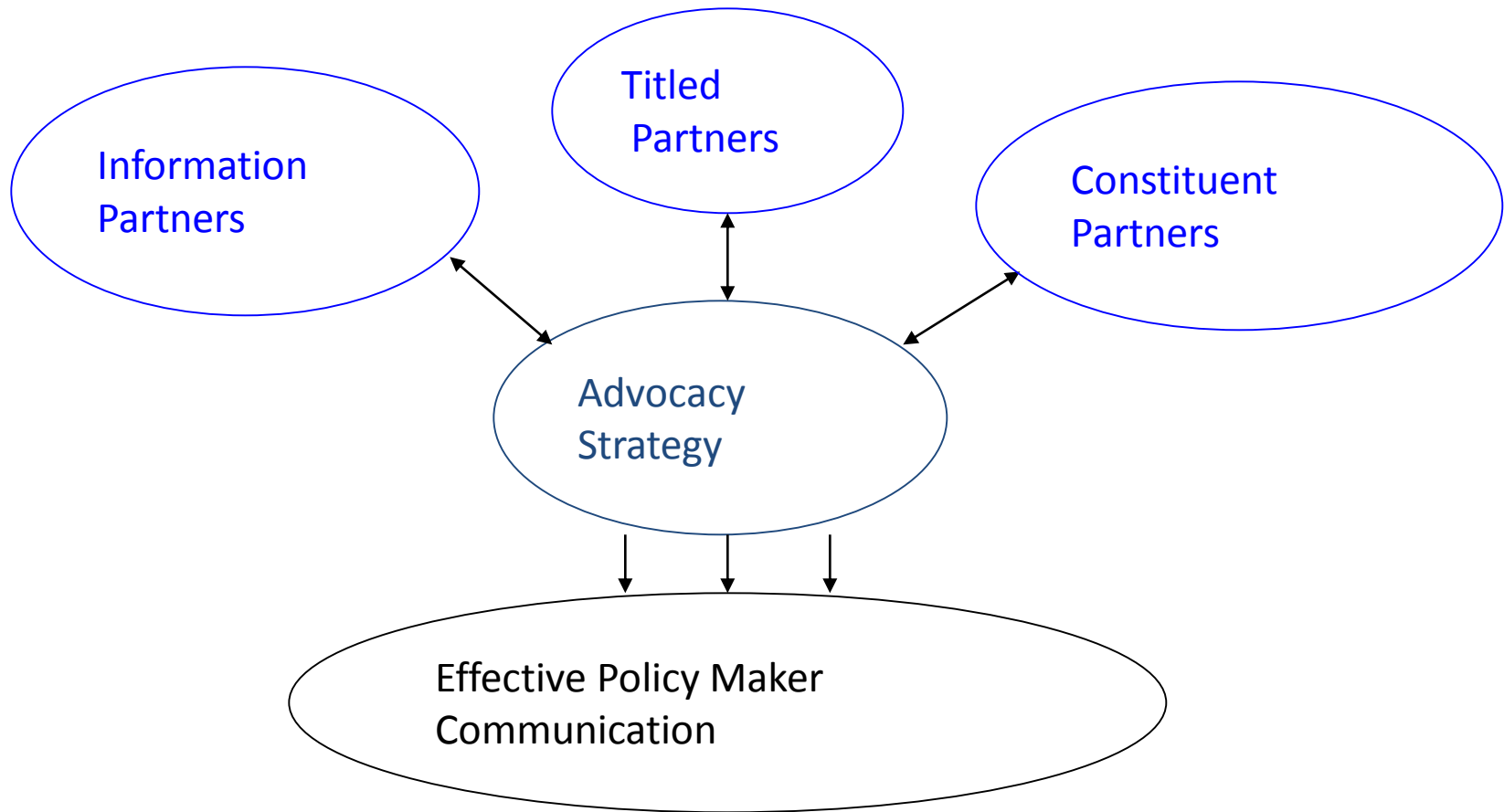
Democracy in Action

- 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

Influencing the State Budget

Fiscal Year 2018 Process

- May 2016 – December 2016: State Departments Submitted Recommendations
- February 2017: Governor's Budget Recommendations
- February – June 2017: Legislative Committees
- May 2017: Final Revenue Estimating Conference
- June 2017: Final Budget Signed by Governor

Opportunities in FY2018

- Learning from the significant increase in investment in preschool programming.
 - Solid research supporting preschool
 - Focused advocacy efforts
 - Legislative legacies
 - Governor's leadership
- The Flint water crisis has opened up policymakers' willingness to learn about the importance of the first three years and they have made investments in Flint specific to the birth to 3 population.
- New legislative session with newly elected lawmakers starting in January 2018.

Advocacy Opportunities

- Use momentum of Flint water crisis to continue to educate lawmakers on the needs of families with young children – including increasing understanding of *Early On*
- Need to reauthorize MIECHV so opportunity to educate federal lawmakers about home visiting
- Focus on preventing expulsion in early care and education settings
- Increasing awareness of interconnectedness of parents and their children in policy impact
- Efforts to increase awareness of ACEs
- Child welfare issues tend to be bipartisan so tailored messaging around abuse/neglect prevention

What To Do Now

- Sign-up for your legislators' emails.
- Begin building a relationship with candidates and elected officials.
- Educate candidates and policymakers about the needs of families with young children
- If your legislators sit on key committees – appropriations or education policy – get to know what they are about and find ways to tie the programs important to your family and your community to the things that they care about. Anticipate that you'll have more than one communication with him/her over the next few months.
- Stay connected to advocacy partners - Michigan's Children!

Michigan's
Children

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