Advocacy 101

... with Nebraska Appleseed
Nebraska Appleseed

- Non-profit, nonpartisan, public interest law project that works for equal justice and full opportunity for all Nebraskans
- We use litigation, public policy reform, and community education to positively impact four key areas:
  - Low-income families
  - Immigrants
  - Children in foster care
  - Access to health care
ADVOCACY

Let your voice be heard!
Types of Advocacy

micro  MACRO

Case vs. Cause
micro: Your Case
Advocate for me
Be Your Own Advocate

- Attend Family Team Meetings
- GAL/your attorney
- Case manager/supervisor
- Your CASA volunteer
- Ombudsman Office
- **Nebraska Appleseed Intake Line**
  - 1-800-845-3746
MACRO: THE GOVERNMENT
Advocate for we
U.S. Government

**CONSTITUTION**

**LEGISLATIVE**
- The U.S. Capitol
- HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
- SENATE

**EXECUTIVE**
- The White House
- PRESIDENT
- VICE PRESIDENT

**JUDICIAL**
- The Supreme Court
- SUPREME COURT
Nebraska Government

THREE BRANCHES

LEGISLATIVE
- Unicameral legislature of 49 senators

EXECUTIVE
- Governor Dave Heineman
- Executive Branch Agencies (e.g. DHHS)

JUDICIAL
- Nebraska Supreme Court
- Court of Appeals
- Juvenile Courts
The Legislature

- In session every year
- Lasts 60 or 90 days
- Committees
  - 14 standing
  - 4 select
  - 8 special
Who’s Representing YOU?

- Each senator represents one district
- Who are they?
  - Must be 21, have lived in the district they represent for 1+ year, be a registered voter, and never have been convicted of a felony
  - Senators are citizens, too!
    - Most senators have other jobs
- How do they get there?
  - Elected by citizens
  - Serve up to two 4-year terms
- Find your senator!

NEBRASKA LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS
Lawmaking

Here’s the basic idea:

A problem… An idea! A bill is introduced Lawmakers and others vote on the bill With enough votes, the bill becomes a law Yippee!!!
Lawmaking

- How the U.S. government does it:
  - Schoolhouse Rock
    (WARNING: This video was made in the mid-1970s... Nebraska Appleseed is not responsible for it’s incredibly old-fashioned [yet still surprisingly accurate] content)

- How Nebraska does it:

  Standing Committee ➔ General File ➔ Select File ➔ Final Reading ➔ Governor Approval

LAW!
Where do you come in?
Where to start??
Individual Advocacy in the Legislature

- Testify on behalf of yourself
  - Support/Oppose/Neutral
- Contact your senator or the Governor
  - Phone calls, letters, emails, face-to-face
Group Advocacy in the Legislature

- Take a position on a bill as a group
  - Check out agencies’ prioritized lists

- Testify at a hearing
  - Support/Oppose/Neutral
  - Provide written testimony
  - Provide a fact sheet

- Sign-on letters
Other Group Options…

- Op-eds and other media
- Blogs
- Press conferences
- Rallies
- Action alerts
- Come up with new ideas!
  - Bill drafting
  - Interim study
    • Next steps for LB 1150…
THE END

Question???

YAY!!!!
We made it!