

# Social Workers Advancing Social Change

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Understanding Our Responsibility to  
Engage in Social Justice Advocacy

SFTI  
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# Presentation Outline

- Understanding Political Climate & New Threats
- Social Workers are Agents of Social Change
- Introduction to Advocacy
- How to Engage in Advocacy Efforts
- Questions



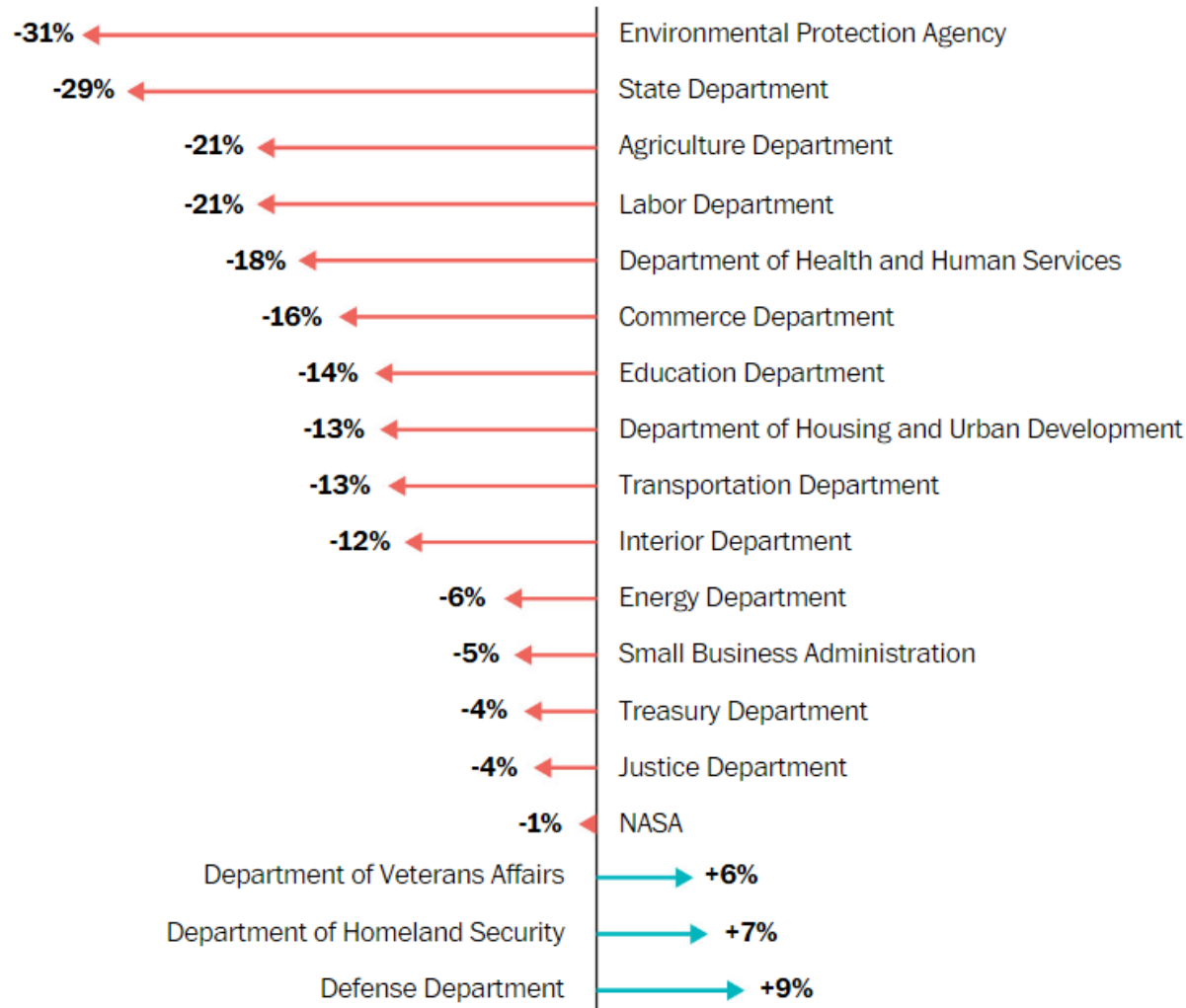
# UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL CLIMATE

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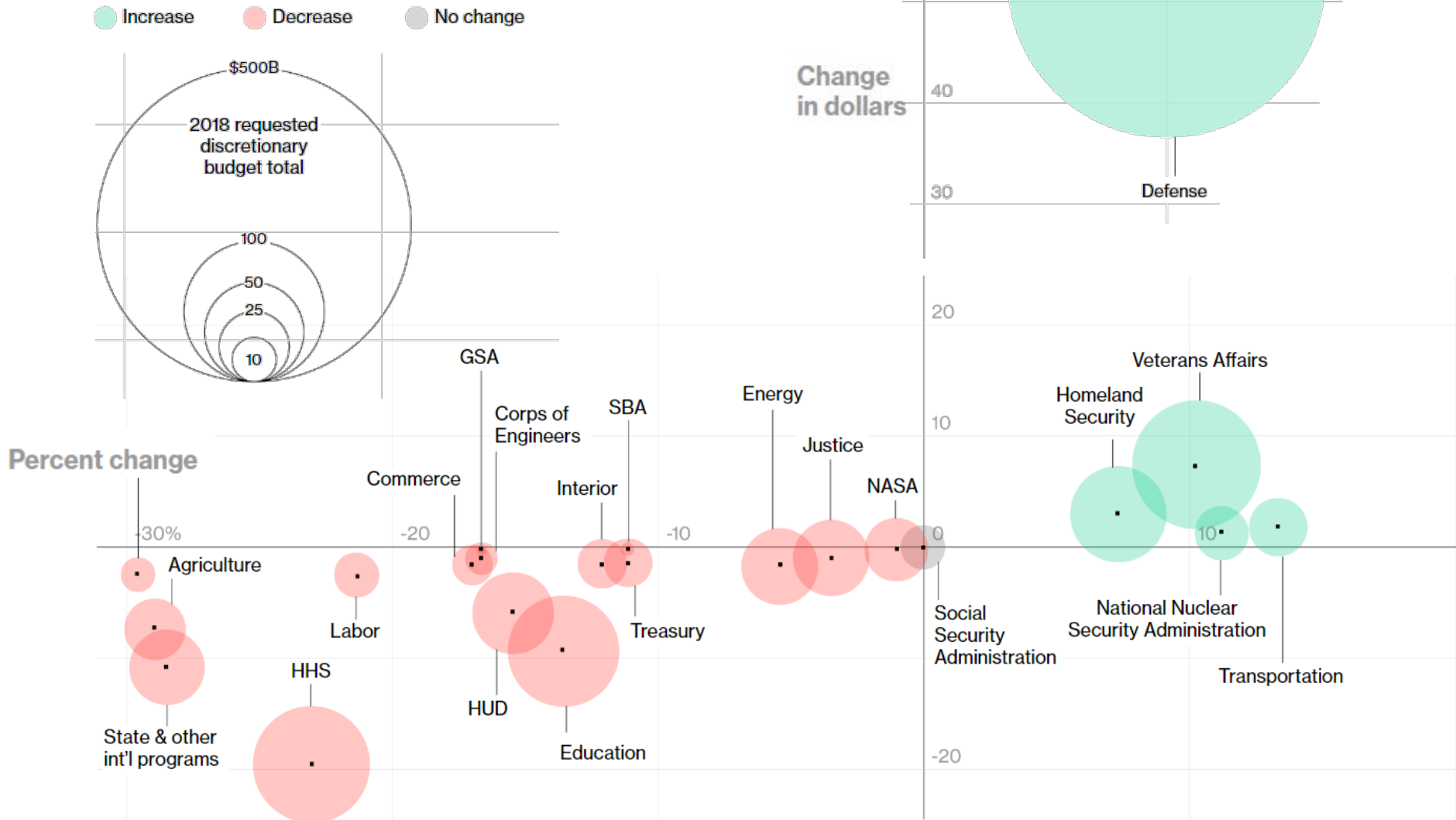
Increasing Policy Threats on  
Oppressed & Vulnerable Populations



# Trump's 2018 Discretionary Budget



# Trump's 2018 Discretionary Budget



# Recommended Cuts to 80+ Programs

- ❑ College federal work-study aid
- ❑ Senior Community Service Employment Program
- ❑ Job Corps
- ❑ Grants for teacher training, after-school and summer programs, and aid programs
- ❑ U.N. peacekeeping
- ❑ Development banks
- ❑ Climate-change prevention programs
- ❑ EPA
- ❑ Institute of Museum and Library Services
- ❑ NASA
- ❑ PBS, NPR
- ❑ Women, Infants and Children nutrition assistance (WIC)
- ❑ Community Development Financial Institutions
- ❑ Small-business owner loan guarantees
- ❑ Community Development Block Grant program
- ❑ HOME Investment Partnerships Program, the Choice Neighborhoods program and the Self-help Homeownership Opportunity Program
- ❑ Section 4 Community Development and Affordable Housing
- ❑ National Institutes of Health

# Attempts to Block Grant Public Benefits

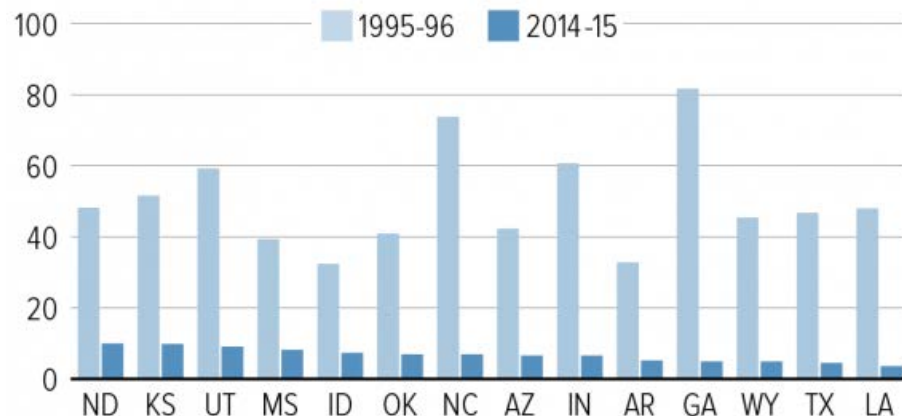
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Medicaid



- Lessons from TANF:

## TANF Serves Hardly Any Poor Families in Some States

In 14 states in 2014-15, TANF provided cash assistance to ten or fewer of every 100 poor families with children



TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Note: Poor families with children received benefits under Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) in 1995-96, before TANF replaced AFDC under the 1996 welfare law.

Source: CBPP analysis of poverty data from the Current Population Survey and TANF caseload data from Department of Health and Human Services and (since September 2006) caseload data collected by CBPP from state agencies.

# American Health Care Act

## BY THE NUMBERS: HOUSE GOP HEALTH PLAN IN 2026

**24 million** People would lose health insurance coverage

**\$155 billion** Cut in federal Medicaid funding

**\$38 billion** Cut in the subsidies that help families afford health coverage and out-of-pocket expenses

**\$12,900** Increase in typical 64-year-old's out-of-pocket premium cost in the individual market

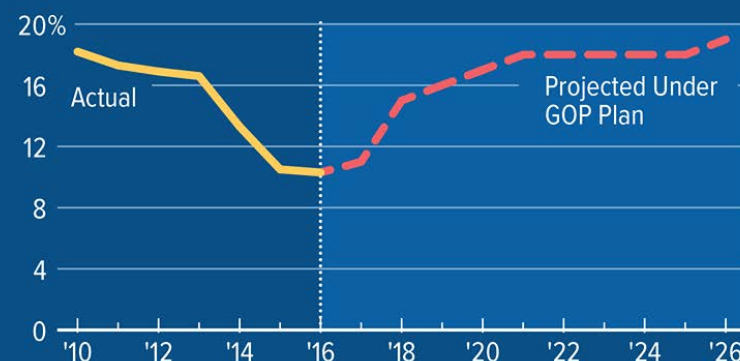
**\$20 billion** Millionaires get at least this much in tax cuts

**\$7 million** Estimated average tax cut for the top 400 households

Source: Congressional Budget Office, Joint Committee on Taxation, and CBPP  
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## CBO: HOUSE GOP PLAN WOULD REVERSE ALL ACA COVERAGE GAINS

Non-elderly uninsured rate, 2010-2026



Source: National Health Interview Survey; Congressional Budget Office

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# Immigration & Refugee Orders

- Immigrant & Refugee Executive Orders

- Suspend refugees for 120 days
- Travel ban from six countries for 90 days



- Guidance on Immigration Laws & Border Security

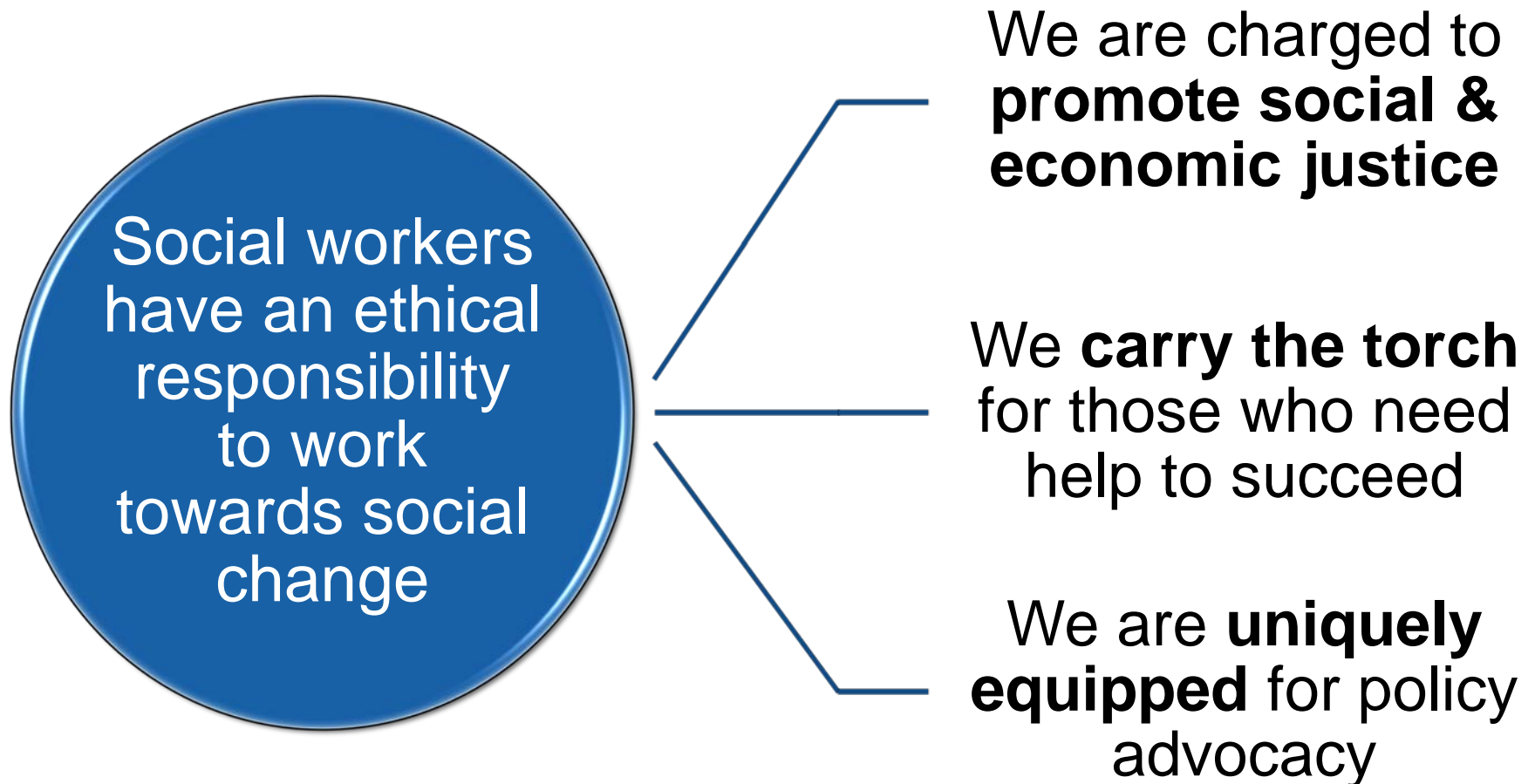
- Mass deportations of undocumented immigrants
- Remove protections from unaccompanied minors

# WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO ACT

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# Social Workers: Agents of Social Change

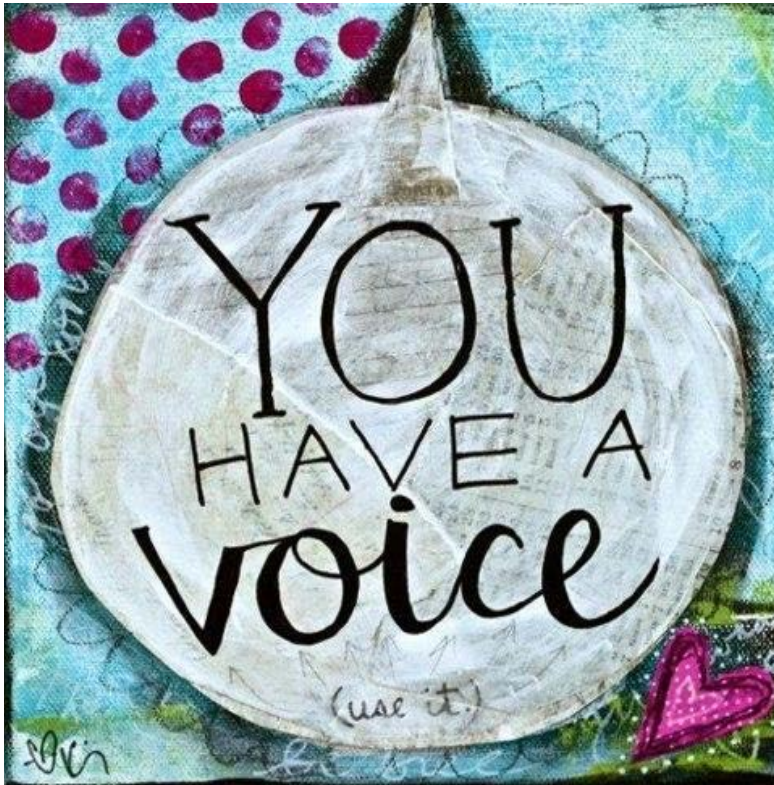


# NASW Code of Ethics Preamble

- **Focus** on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society
- **Understand** the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living
- **Promote** social justice and social change
- **Strive** to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice
- **Engage** in community organizing, advocacy, education, social and political action, and policy development and implementation



# Social Workers Have a Powerful Voice



- Our connection to social justice advocacy is what distinguishes social work from other professions
- Social workers have always been on the forefront of social justice advocacy

# INTRODUCTION TO ADVOCACY

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# Advocacy Definitions

- **Public policy:** Decisions we make at every level of government that direct how we will care for one another, our communities, and the land
- **Advocacy:** Attempts to influence decision-making systems
- **Lobbying:** An advocacy process of influencing public policy at federal, state, and local levels
- **Social Justice:** The view that everyone deserves equal economic, political, and social rights and opportunities
- **Social Change:** The transformation of culture values and norms and social institutions over time



# Advocacy: Removing Systemic Barriers



- They are being treated equally



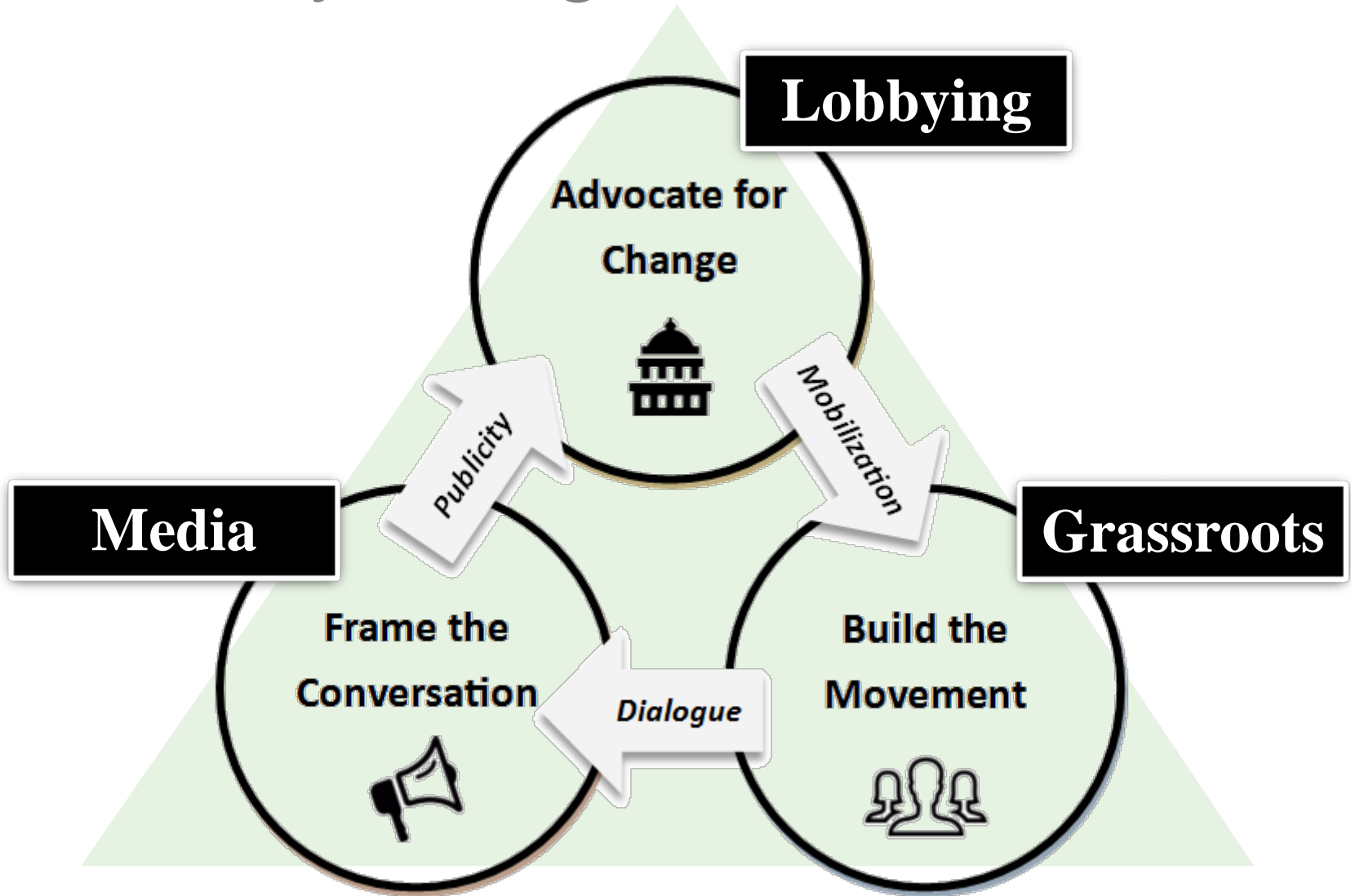
- They are being treated equitably



- The systemic barrier was removed

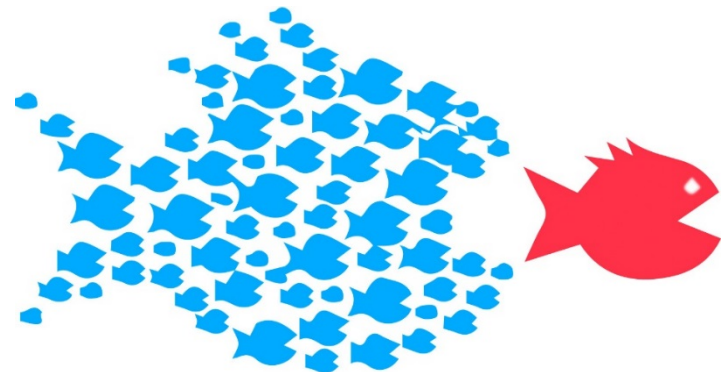


# Advocacy Triangle



# How to Select Issues

- What policy barriers are impacting my work?
- What policies are threatening vulnerable and oppressed populations?
- Where are my passions and unique areas of knowledge?
- What are the 'SALIENT' issues?
- What issues have organized efforts or campaigns?



# Policy Advocacy & Racial Equity



What disparities exist among different groups?



Does the advocacy effort worsen or ignore existing disparities?



How might the effort affect each group? How might each group perceive the effort?



Are all racial/ethnic groups who could be affected currently engaged at any level?



What steps can we take to build social, economic, and political power of these groups?

# HOW TO ENGAGE IN ADVOCACY EFFORTS

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Understanding the Territory  
& Tips for Messaging and Meetings



# Know the Territory

- State officials
  - Governor, C. L. “Butch” Otter
  - Lieutenant Governor, Brad Little
  - Secretary of State, Lawrence Denney
  - State Controller, Brandon Woolf
  - State Treasurer, Ron Crane
  - Attorney General, Lawrence G. Wasden
  - State Superintendent, Sherri Ybarra
- Idaho Legislature
  - Representatives (35)
  - Senate (70)
- Congressional Delegation
  - Senator Mike Crapo
  - Senator James E. Risch
  - Representative Raúl Labrador
  - Representative Mike Simpson
- State Judicial Branch
  - District Courts
  - Idaho Supreme Court



# Know the Territory

- The policy process varies for different legislative bodies
  - Idaho's legislative process is traditionally slow
  - Idaho Legislators have limited staff assistance
  - Congressmen are harder to reach



- Know when your voice will be heard
  - Public Hearings on the issue
  - Lobbying elected officials
  - Rallies and town hall meetings

*"Social advance depends as much upon the process through which it is secured as upon the result itself."*

*- Jane Adams*

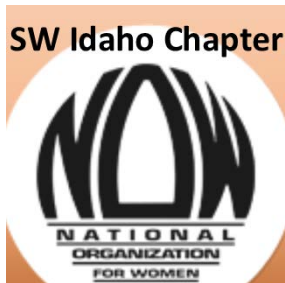
# Identify Tactics & Opportunities

- Rallies/turnout events
- Petition drives
- Letter writing
- Visits with public officials
- Public hearings
- Mass demonstrations
- Accountability sessions
- Educational meetings
- Civil disobedience and arrest
- Legal Disruptive tactics (picket lines)
- Boycotts





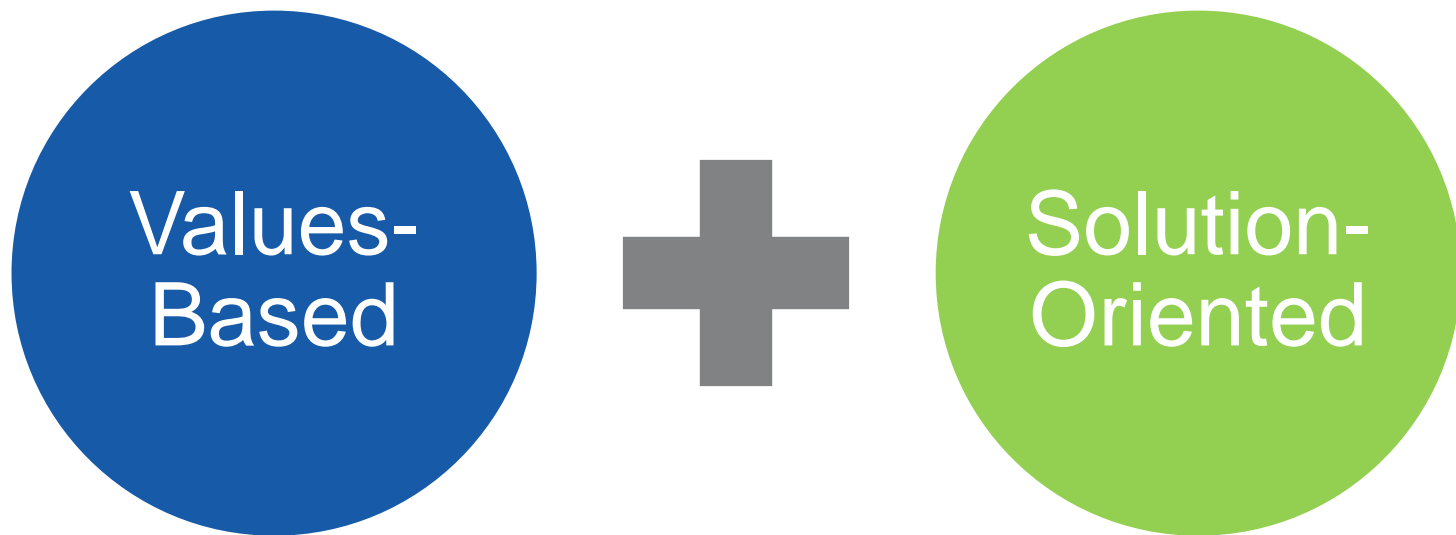
# Identify Advocacy Campaigns





# Convey Your Message Effectively

- 1. Convey a Values-Based Message**
- 2. Focus on the solution**



# Convey Your Message: Tips

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1. Values first

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2. Be aspirational

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3. Elevate public systems

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4. Focus on 'we'

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5. Share your story



WHAT'S  
YOUR  
STORY?

# Convey Your Message: Caution

- Don't Go Negative:

- Don't use language that 'otherizes'
- Don't step into the other side's 'frame'



- Don't use jargon and use statistics sparingly
- Don't repeat stereotypes
- You should never:
  - Lie
  - Argue
  - Ramble
  - Be sarcastic, critical, or threatening

# The Power of Relationship Building

- **We are in this work for the long haul!**

- Take time to build relationships with elected officials
- Set the stage for a relationship by inviting the official to your site to get to know you

- Remember that each encounter with an elected official is part of an ongoing conversation



# Tips for Talking with Elected Officials

1. YOU can make a difference and be an agent of change
2. Elected officials want to hear from you
3. There are a variety of opportunities to communicate with your officials



4. "What" you want to communicate is as important as "how" you communicate
5. Establish short-term and long-term goals

# Tips for Talking with Elected Officials

- 6. You are unlikely to agree on every issue
- 7. You aren't expected to know everything
- 8. Always say "thank you"
- 9. If you visited in person, don't forget to send a follow-up note
- 10. Become as involved and informed as possible!**





**“Social work is not nor should  
it be a neutral profession.”**





QUESTIONS