

Advocacy as a Tool for Shaping Policy

Advocacy is a powerful and essential part of the policy-making process. It allows individuals, communities, and organizations to influence decisions that affect their lives, and it has been central to shaping legislation, regulations, and public priorities throughout U.S. history.

In fact, advocacy is embedded in formal government processes. For example, the federal government is required to offer public comment periods on certain proposed rules and regulations, giving the public a direct opportunity to weigh in. Another example is congressional hearings, where advocates can provide testimony to inform legislative decisions.

Advocates have played a crucial role in shaping outcomes across all three branches of the federal government:

- ▶ In Congress, advocacy campaigns can influence which bills are introduced, amended, or passed
- ▶ In the executive branch, public pressure can shape agency priorities and regulations
- ▶ In the judicial branch, legal advocacy can impact landmark court decisions and interpretations of constitutional rights

From grassroots movements to formal lobbying efforts, advocacy continues to be one of the most effective ways to drive change and hold institutions accountable.

Ways to Advocate

Advocacy can take many forms, and the approach you choose will often depend on the issue at hand, as well as the time, capacity, and resources available to you. Some strategies may have a greater impact than others, depending on the context and goals of your advocacy.

- ▶ Contacting Media Outlets
- ▶ Donating
- ▶ Engaging in Protests and Demonstrations
- ▶ Organizing a Petition/Signing onto Petitions for Specific Causes
- ▶ Participating in Advocacy Days
- ▶ Participating in Town Hall Meetings
- ▶ Public Speaking or Hosting Events
- ▶ Social Media Campaigns
- ▶ Supporting Boycotts
- ▶ Volunteering
- ▶ Voting in Local, State, and National Elections
- ▶ Writing Opinion Pieces, Letters to the Editor, or Blog Posts
- ▶ Writing to or Calling Elected Officials

BREAKING THE SILENCE ON MENOPAUSE: FROM TABOO TO BIPARTISAN ACTION

For years, menopause was a whisper in the back of the room — an experience shared by millions, yet rarely spoken of in the halls of power. That changed in the 118th Congress, when advocates and lawmakers from both sides of the aisle united to spotlight this long-overlooked phase of women's health. Thanks to tireless advocacy, menopause finally gained legislative attention, with new bills introduced — like the Advancing Menopause Care and Mid-Life Women's Health Act and the Servicewomen and Veterans Menopause Research Act — to provide improved research, education, and support for women undergoing the menopause transition. It proved that even historically stigmatized topics can spark bipartisan momentum when real stories meet real advocacy.

