



## Advocacy 101: How to Use Your Voice in the Political Process

*Advocacy (noun) -public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy.*

Advocacy can be...

- asking your community's elected officials for permission to allow temporary street closures for outdoor dining
- arranging a meeting with an elected official and then educating them about the value of investments to incentivize first time home ownership
- partnering with government agencies to seek creative solutions to create more child care programs
- convening community leaders at times of natural disaster or human crisis to develop solutions for the community and promote healing

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We all advocate for things we care about in our daily lives - our businesses, our families, our communities. Your voice as an advocate is crucial to the public policy process, and there are many ways to use it.

1. **Get to know your legislators and elected officials** - Attend a virtual town hall or briefing to introduce yourself. Remember elected officials represent their constituents and the squeaky wheel often gets the oil.
2. **Engage with an organization that can represent and promote your policy positions at the local and state levels** - The Bend Chamber works with a variety of local and state partners to advance common goals. Participation is always welcome and encouraged as two minds are better than one.
3. **Write your elected officials** - The most efficient way to communicate with your elected officials is via writing a letter or an email. Personalization and specific examples about the

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policy you support or oppose stands out versus a form letter or email.

4. **Provide testimony on important policy initiatives and legislation** - Providing testimony is not as daunting as it may seem. Prepare and organize your two minute “elevator speech” and be prepared to answer questions, but don’t be afraid to say “I don’t know but I’ll get back to you.”
  5. **Use data to promote your position** - Arguments based in data and statistics are persuasive, but ensure you have the sources to back up your statements.
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Public policy can play a powerfully positive role in making the world a better place. And it can help organizations make important advances that create lasting, positive change. True solutions, instead of temporary fixes. <sup>1</sup>

For more information or guidance on how to engage in the Bend Chamber’s advocacy efforts at the local and state levels, please contact [Sara Odendahl](#), Government Affairs Consultant. We welcome your participation and engagement.

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<sup>1</sup> Advocacy Resources provided from the Center for Lobbying and Public Interest: <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/everyday-advocacy-resources#tool>

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