

## ADVOCACY IS FOR EVERYONE!

When you hear the word *advocacy* what is the first thing that comes to mind? Maybe people in business suits at the capitol? Or perhaps activists protesting at a community board meeting? We often think of a very specific set of people, in a specific location, taking part in a specific action. While these are definitely examples of advocacy, they sometimes imply that only *those* people should be participating in advocacy work. Despite this idea, it has become increasingly clear that we are all called to be involved in advocacy efforts. Everyone's combined efforts are required in order to make larger systemic changes. Since most of us aren't in the profession of community organizing, here are some ways, small and large, that we can all begin doing advocacy work in our everyday lives here in the United States.

### ***Pick an Issue***

- There are many social injustices happening around the country and it's impossible to be involved in everything. But you can pick one or two issues that you feel passionate about and dive in head first! Don't spread yourself too thin with more than a few issues.

### ***Stay informed***

- Local TV news, newspapers, phone apps, etc.
- The Skimm – don't have time to watch the news or read the newspaper every day? Looking for a condensed version of the world's headlines? The Skimm will send you an email every morning with the most important events within the past 24 hours and it takes about 5-10 minutes to be caught up on the biggest current events!

### ***Social Media***

- Follow news sources/activists on Facebook/Instagram/Twitter
- Write a blog or op-ed piece for the media
- Tweet your elected official
- *90% of legislators in the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress have a Facebook or Twitter Account*
- *66% of legislators' media managers use social media to understand constituent views and opinions*

### ***Vote! – It's the most fundamental way to practice one of your basic rights as a U.S. citizen***

- Not registered? 23 states offer online registration, and the remaining states require a form to be filled out and submitted to your local Secretary of State. For more information, visit [usa.gov/register-to-vote](http://usa.gov/register-to-vote)

### ***Find out who your elected officials are and where they stand on the issues***

- Go to [commoncause.org](http://commoncause.org) and then click "Find Your Lawmakers" at the top of the page

### ***Reach Out***

- Call your elected officials
- Write a letter/email your elected officials
- *97% of congressional staffers said that postal mail has an influence on undecided members*
- *88% said the same of email*
- Visit elected officials – face to face office visits are the most effective tool of advocacy