Saving the Social Safety Net:
Advocacy Lessons for Funders

Key Concepts and Resources
Advocacy Strategy & Evaluation

Components of an Enabling Environment

- Influential Support Coalition
- Well-Defined Narrative
- Feasible Solution
- Strong Advocacy Capacity
- Powerful Champions
- Mobilized Public
- Clear Path and Resources for Implementation
Key Advocacy Concepts

**Advocacy**
Any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or defends, or pleads on behalf of a cause or group.

**Lobbying**
An attempt to influence specific legislation by communicating views to legislators or asking people to contact their legislators.

**Political Activity**
Any activity conducted to influence the election of any individual to public office.
## Advocacy Landscape

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>Ford Foundation</td>
<td>New Venture Fund</td>
<td>Sixteen Thirty Fund</td>
<td>Service Employees International Union (SEIU)</td>
<td>EMILY’s List</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Status</td>
<td>Tax-Exempt</td>
<td>Tax-Exempt Contributions NOT tax-deductible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lobbying</td>
<td><strong>PROHIBITED</strong></td>
<td><strong>LIMITED</strong></td>
<td><strong>UNLIMITED</strong></td>
<td><strong>UNLIMITED</strong></td>
<td><strong>LIMITED</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tax on foundation &amp; managers</td>
<td>“insubstantial” part or 501(h) election</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>May be subject to tax if not furthering political purposes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Can fund projects that include lobbying.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Activities</td>
<td><strong>PROHIBITED</strong></td>
<td><strong>PROHIBITED</strong></td>
<td><strong>LIMITED</strong></td>
<td><strong>LIMITED</strong></td>
<td><strong>NO LIMIT, but...</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Can lead to loss of exempt status and tax on organization &amp; managers</td>
<td>Can lead to loss of exempt status and tax on organization &amp; managers</td>
<td>Subject to federal &amp; state campaign finance laws.</td>
<td>Subject to federal &amp; state campaign finance laws.</td>
<td>Subject to federal &amp; state campaign finance laws, including limits on contributions</td>
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**NOTE:** All political committees that register & file reports with the FEC are 527s, but not all 527s are federally registered.
# Funding Advocacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advocacy Activity</th>
<th>Private Foundations</th>
<th>Public Foundations</th>
<th>Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>501(c)(3) lobbying</td>
<td>Can fund projects and organizations that conduct lobbying, but funds cannot be earmarked for lobbying (general support or project grant rule grants).</td>
<td>Can make grants earmarked for lobbying, as long as public foundation complies with its own lobbying limits.</td>
<td>Permitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501(c)(3) non-partisan election activities</td>
<td>May support 501(c)(3) permissible non-partisan voter education activities.</td>
<td>May support 501(c)(3) permissible non-partisan voter education activities.</td>
<td>Permitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501(c)(4) lobbying</td>
<td>Prohibited</td>
<td>Can make grants earmarked for lobbying, as long as public foundation complies with its own lobbying limits.</td>
<td>Permitted</td>
</tr>
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<td>501(c)(4) political activity</td>
<td>Prohibited</td>
<td>Prohibited</td>
<td>Permitted</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Affiliated 501(c)(3)-501(c)(4)s

- 501(c)(3)s can set up separately incorporated 501(c)(4)s
  - Together these are considered “affiliated organizations” or “joint projects/campaigns”
  - Set up properly, can maximize educational and lobbying activities out of the 501(c)(3), laying foundation for targeted lobbying and political activity out of the 501(c)(4)
(c)3/(c)4 Campaign Profile

Health Care for America Now Education Fund
(New Venture Fund)

- Funded 501(c)3 **capacity building and education field work** as part of Health Care for America Now Education Fund’s overall coordinated campaign.

- In 2017, Health Care for America Now Education Fund groups reached over 1.8 million people through on the ground **public education efforts** in over 30 states.

Health Care for America Now
(Sixteen Thirty Fund)

- Funded 501(c)4 field work in targeted states and districts that successfully pushed back regressive repeal legislation as part of HCAN’s coordinated legislative advocacy campaign.

- Organized and led weekly grassroots coalition calls to share information, provide communication guidance, and **mobilize key constituency field operations** to push back against regressive legislation in a strategic and coordinated manner.

- Executed a joint New Venture Fund and Sixteen Thirty Fund contract with Berlin Rosen, allowing the projects to provide **cohesive C3/C4 messaging**.
Private Foundations and Lobbying

- Two ways a private foundation can fund a 501(c)3 organization or project that engages in lobbying:

**General Support Grant**

Funder cannot provide any written or oral direction about the use of funds. The grantee can use the funds for *anything* that they want, including *lobbying activities*.

**Project Grant Rule**

Funder can review a bifurcated budget and make a grant up to the size of the total non-lobbying expenses. Foundation can neither earmark funds for lobbying nor prohibit lobbying in the grant agreement. Requires multiple funders to fund the project *without lobbying prohibitions*. 
Project Grant Rule

Each Foundation Grant ≤ Project’s non-lobbying component

Graphic courtesy of Alliance for Justice
## Rapid Response Fund Tactics

- Clear governance
- Delegated decision-making
- Transparent process
- Streamlined application using existing materials
- Universal grant size
- Rolling response or rapid mini-dockets
- Real-time omnidirectional reporting
- Leverage aligned funding where appropriate
Advocacy Resources

Bolder Advocacy – *an initiative of Alliance for Justice*

Monitoring and Evaluating Advocacy – *UNICEF*

A Guide to Measuring Advocacy and Policy – *Annie E. Casey Foundation*

Why Strategic Philanthropy (Almost) Always Involves Advocacy – *Arabella Advisors*

Sample Metrics for Advocacy Evaluation – *The Urban Institute*

Questions?

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