

# CAN ADVOCACY BE FUN? ARE YOU SURE?

**Yes, we are sure, and here are some tips/thoughts on how to involve youth in creative and youth-friendly ways...**

## 1. Talk With Your Mouth Full

Okay, maybe wait till your mouth isn't full, but try having a **phone bank pizza party**. Organize a meeting after school with good snacks. See if there are several offices/phones you can use at once. Then create an easy script about the issue you're advocating for/against, or have your youth do this, and post it up on the wall. Give each person a copy of the script and their legislators' numbers to call. After everyone has made at least one call, gather up, compare notes and give three cheers for democracy.

## 2. Go to Their House

The **State House**, that is. After all, everyone loves a road trip. Yes, this is a more involved type of event but it can be well worth it. See if your local legislator can meet with your group before hand and then set a date. Plan some meetings with your local representatives and other people willing to talk to your youth group about the bills they are interested in and/or the legislative process in general. When you get home, see if one or two of your youth want to write an article for your school newspaper.

## 3. Sing in the Streets

Challenge your group to come up with a **fun jingle, rap or rhyme** as a way to teach their peers about advocacy or about a specific policy issue. Have them learn through the idea of teaching others, perhaps slightly younger peers. Give them the leeway to be really creative with this one. This may be a longer-term project but can be a great way to connect with an issue and educate others at the same time!

## 4. Wear It On Your Sleeve (or Bumper)

Talk with your youth about the message or policy you are working to change. Invite them come up with a bumper sticker or pin or some other type of **visual statement** or symbol that they could spread around to spread the word. Make it a contest or provide a cool prize for those who give out the most of whatever you make.

## 5. Change the Wallpaper

Try this **twist on the traditional petition**. Instead of collecting signatures on a long list, get permission to do a wall display. Have everyone who supports what you are trying to do fill out a form that you then post for everyone to see (like in the fundraisers they do in grocery stores & gas stations). The design can be eye-catching—think of something that represents what you're trying to change, like a design of a fruit if you're trying to get more healthy lunch choices. A picture speaks louder than words, and the power of all those forms up on the wall with people's names will make a big impact!

**Remember, the most important thing** is to make whatever you do **feel relevant to youth and to their lives**. Our democratic system does not always make it easy for youth to feel like activism and advocacy are theirs for the taking, but it is and there are so many ways that they can change the world through changing policies and changing minds.