



The Importance of Advocacy

Advocacy means to speak up, to plead the case of another, or to fight for a cause. Derived from the Latin word *advocare*, which means “coming to the aid of someone.” It describes a wide range of expressions, actions and activities that seek to influence outcomes directly affecting the lives of the people served by the organization.

Advocacy should not be confused with lobbying. Lobbying, as defined by the Internal Revenue Service, involves attempts to influence legislation at the local, state or federal level. Advocacy is more about issues than specific legislation. Lobbying always involves advocacy, though advocacy does not always involve lobbying. Both are important tools for most non-profit organizations and our constituencies. Government regulations and laws have a significant and powerful impact on every nonprofit organization and the people we serve. This makes it imperative for nonprofits like TexProtects to become involved with policymakers at the city, county, state and national levels who affect our constituencies. TexProtects provides a critical service of speaking out for Texas children and survivors of child maltreatment. We serve these children who have a limited voice in the policy process. TexProtects is driven by its commitment to a broad community – all those who may be affected by the devastating consequences of child maltreatment and those professionals sworn to protect them. With the stigma still attached to abuse victims, especially victims of sexual abuse, those most affected are often the most silent – we must speak on their behalf!

Reduced to its most basic level, effective nonprofit advocacy is about communication and relationships. Usually changes come about slowly, and advocates need to exercise persuasiveness, persistence and patience in representing an issue. Effective advocates are flexible and resourceful, willing to compromise, negotiate, collaborate, and prioritize to accomplish our goals.

TexProtects’ advocacy work takes many forms. While we do reach out to our elected officials directly, more frequently we aim educate the public by researching issues and solutions to child abuse and neglect, making effective use of the media through the Internet, newspaper, radio and TV coverage and inspiring others to act.

TexProtects is the link between the latest child abuse prevention research and informed, effective public policy. A combination of private and public funding is leveraged to create broad-scale systemic change. TexProtects is the only autonomous, nonpartisan, statewide membership organization taking a holistic approach to child abuse on a prevention continuum advocating reforms and funding. Since inception, TexProtects has led the passage of over 41 bills that have improved child protection and is responsible for raising over \$100 million in funding for proven prevention programs that currently reaches more than 21,000 families per year. TexProtects worked with coalitions to raise millions of additional dollars to improve the quality of Child Protective Services.

Together, we can, and must, do even more. We are looking for individuals to commit to joining ***TexProtects’ Advocacy Team***. Responsibilities primarily involve responding to select action alerts by contacting local elected officials and writing letters to the editors of local papers. It also means you will commit to not only staying informed about the issues connected to [TexProtects’ mission](#), but also spreading the word with those you know.

Please take a moment to sign up for our advocacy alerts on [our website](#), [“Like” us on Facebook](#), and [follow us on Twitter](#).