Psychology and LGBT+ State Legislative Advocacy 2022

APA Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity Portfolio & Advocacy Office

APA Division 44 Society for the Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity Public Policy Committee

Thursday, March 10th, 2022 - 3:30-5 pm EST

State Legislative Update

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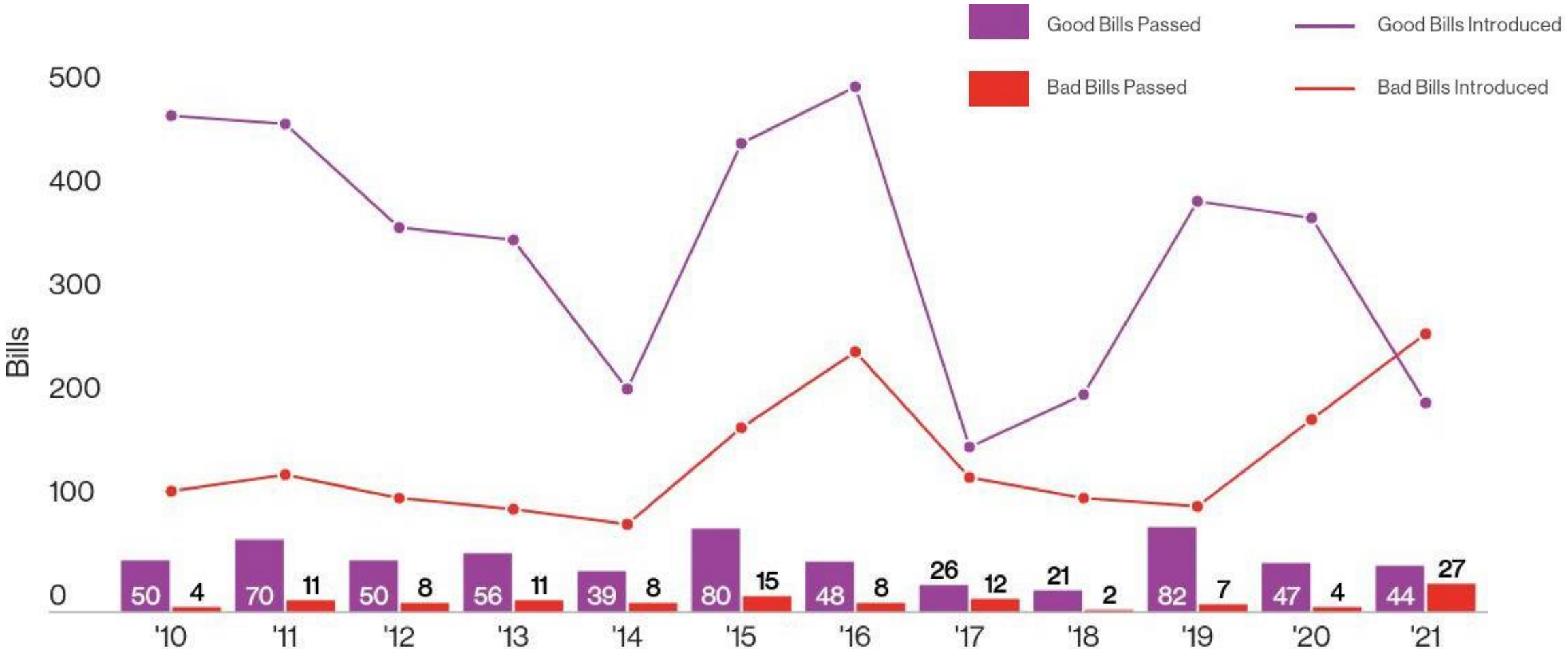
HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN®

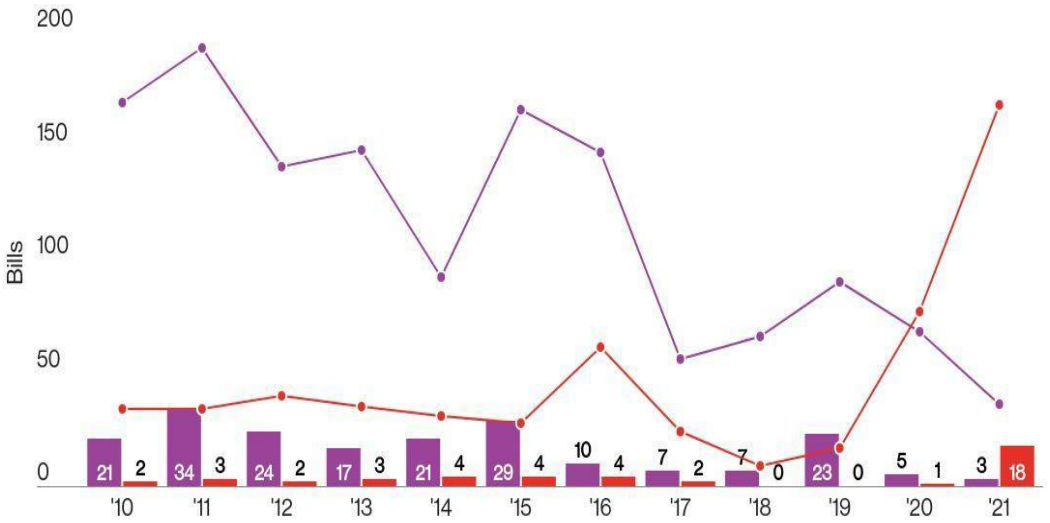
2021: Historic state legislative session



For more see www.hrc.org/sei

Attacks on transgender youth were unmatched

Youth bills 2010-2021

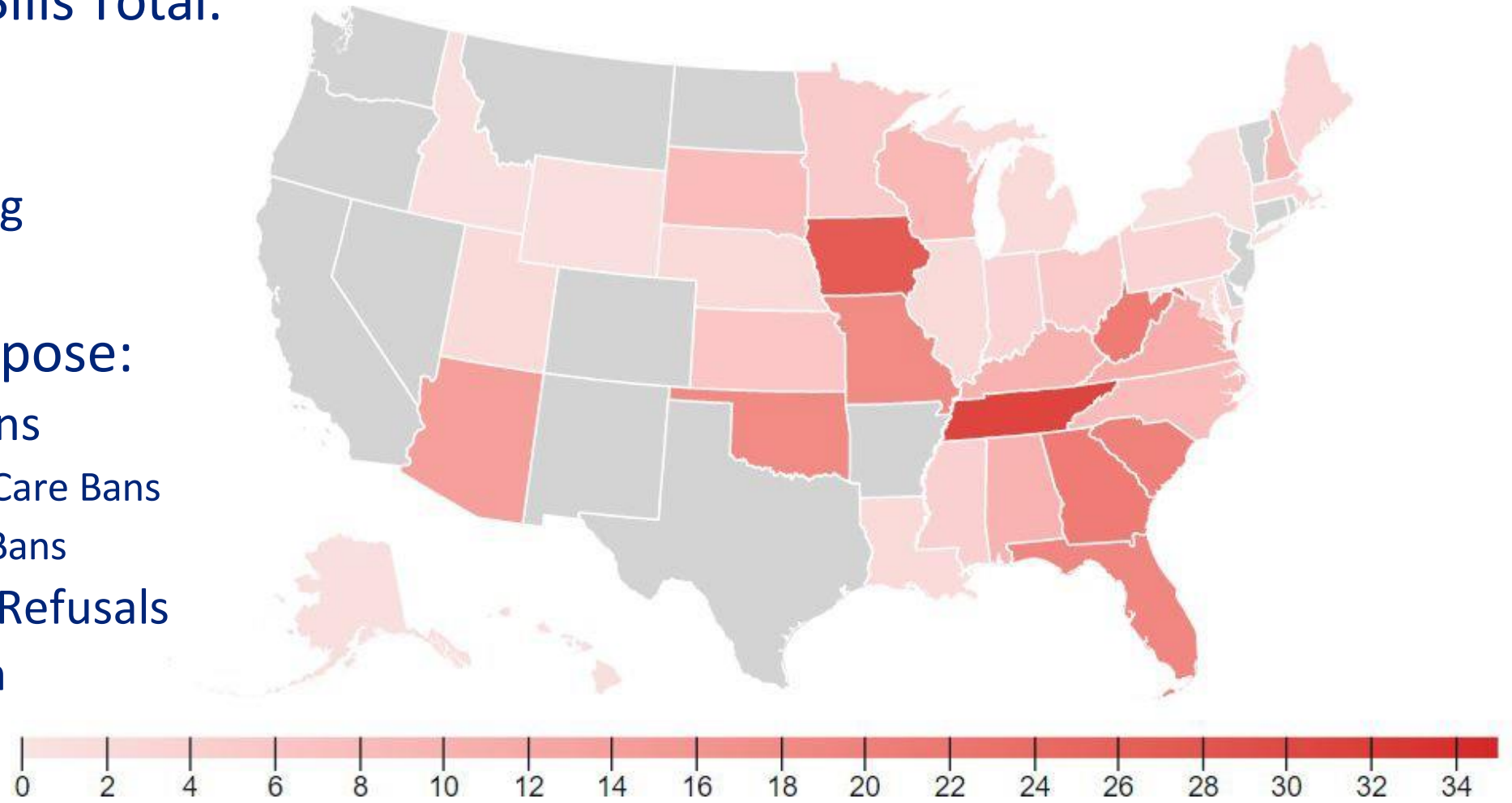


- 2020 record 79 anti-trans bills introduced; 2021 vaulted past that record with 149
- Particular areas of focus: trans youth playing sports, trans youth receiving medical care.
- Also notable: bathrooms, locker rooms
- Precursor to what we're seeing in 2022 – bills relating to pronoun use by teachers; diversity training by public institutions (including schools); and curriculum censorship

The Stats So Far:

- Tracking 565 Bills Total:
  - 132 Support
  - 304 Oppose
  - 129 Watching

- Of the 304 Oppose:
  - 126 Anti-Trans
    - 38 Health Care Bans
    - 67 Sports Bans
  - 32 Religious Refusals
  - 65 Education



*These are very raw numbers & change hourly

As of this very moment:

- **5 Harmful Bills Awaiting Governor's Signature or Veto:**
  - Florida HB 1557 "Don't Say Gay or Trans"
  - Indiana anti-trans sports ban bill (has 7 days to sign once it reaches him, also becomes law without signature)
  - South Dakota HB 1012, a curriculum censorship bill
  - Utah HB 11 anti-trans sports ban (governor has committed to veto)
  - Wisconsin AB 963 to allow lawsuits to be filed against school districts or school officials over the use of students' chosen names or pronouns, governor is expected to veto
- **2 Harmful Bills Signed into Law**
  - Iowa and South Dakota anti-trans sports bans opposed by HRC
- **1 Positive Bill Signed into Law**
  - New Jersey HIV Decriminalization Bill

Actions You Can Take

- Testify - the messenger matters
  - The opposition will be there.
  - Kids who are trans/nb/questioning will be there.
  - Their worried parents will be there.
  - Oh yeah – lawmakers too!
- Check out HRC's weekly stakeholder report for updates on quickly moving legislation, needs, and actions.
- Engage local advocates in conversations about how to defeat these bills - your voices are extremely impactful!

Questions?

Advocacy Skills Building

Engaging in Advocacy and Communicating with Policymakers

APA Advocacy Office

March 10, 2022

Engaging in Advocacy Actions

Advocacy is Easy to Fit into Your Life.

Whether you only have a few minutes or entire days available, you can tailor how you advance a cause that matters to you.

Organizations and coalitions offer resources and opportunities for action for any level of commitment and experience.

Entry Level: Chiming in

Engagements that take less than 15 minutes:

- Engage with an action alert (2 minutes).
- Post on social media, including sharing posts, and tag your elected officials (2 minutes).
- Call your elected officials' offices (5 minutes).
- Mail a post card to elected officials (5-15 minutes).
- Send a letter to the editor (10-30 minutes).

Intermediate: Building Bridges

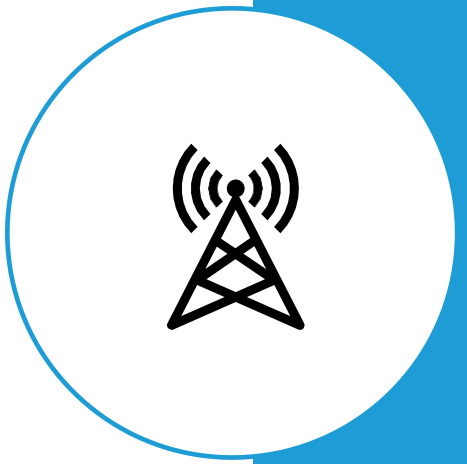
Engagements that take from 15 minutes up to a day:

- Write an email directly to your elected officials, sharing your insights / expertise on an issue (15-30 minutes).
- Schedule introductory meetings with your elected officials (30 minutes – 1 hour).
- Schedule issue-specific meetings with elected officials (30 minutes – 1 hour).
- Attend a town hall or political event (1-2 hours).
- Participate in an Advocacy Summit (1 day).

Advanced: Empower Diverse Voices for Psychology

Length of time will vary based on activity - expect multiple interactions over several days.

- Organize a group stakeholder meeting with or group sign-on letter to new strategic targets.
- Organize a call-in or office drop-in campaign with other stakeholders to increase visibility.
- Organize a Hill Day delegation (including through coalitions) at a strategic time.
- Organize a stakeholder meeting or town hall (virtual or in-person) to show in-district support/opposition.
- Train new allies to amplify voices on an issue.



Key Takeaways:

- Research elected officials in advance to find common ground.
- You do not have to engage in advocacy alone – organizations and coalitions lend resources, structure and context to your advocacy.

Communicating with Policymakers

Goal for a Pitch

"The purpose of a pitch isn't necessarily to move others immediately to adopt your idea. The purpose is to offer something so compelling that it begins a conversation, brings the other person in as a participant, and eventually arrives at an outcome that appeals to both of you."

- Daniel Pink, To Sell is Human.

Elements of a Pitch

What you want them to FEEL

Come prepared with a solution (“the ask”).

APA and other organizations can give you suggestions.

What you want them to KNOW

Establish early on:

- **Why the issue is important.**
- **Why you are a relevant stakeholder.**

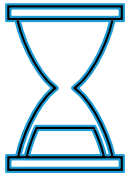
What you want them to DO

Come prepared with a solution (“the ask”).

APA and other organizations can give you suggestions.

Source: Daniel Pink, *To Sell is Human*

Parameters of a Pitch



Keep it short.

Make it an exercise before you begin outreach to summarize in 12 words or less why the issue is important. For example: “Please support HR123 to improve youth access to mental health services.”

Then expand it out to 50 words, including the solution (“youths are facing a mental health crisis…. This bill helps by…”).

A ⟺ B

Keep it simple.

The simpler your information is, the less likely they are to get overwhelmed and tune you out.

Keep it concrete.

People care more about individuals than abstractions. Not only are anecdotes humanizing, but they also help make an issue concrete.

Source: Dan and Chip Heath, *Made to Stick*

Fear not...

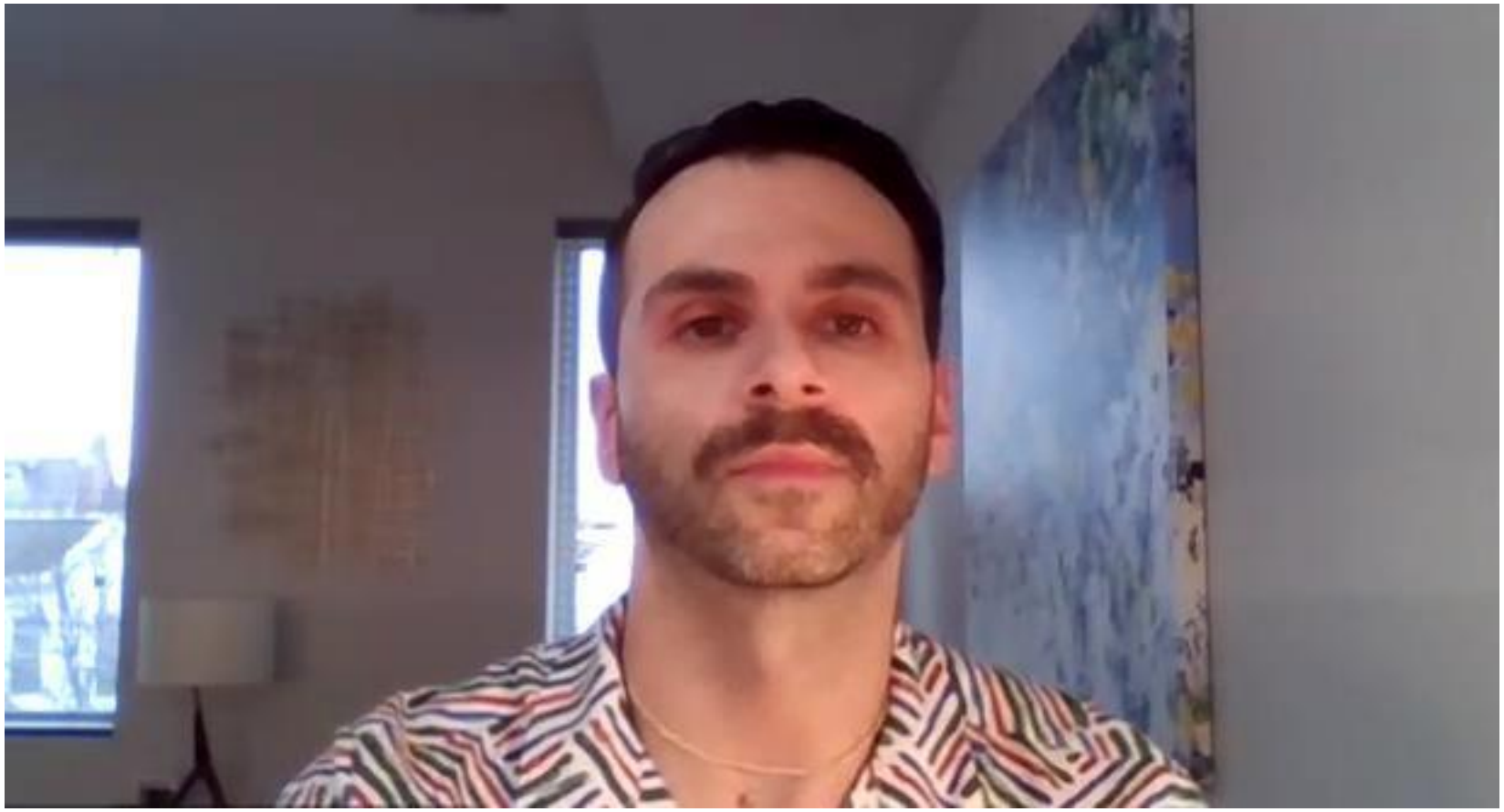
All these elements can be woven into a pitch in a seamless and brief manner.

Example 1: Seeking Mitigation / Prevention

Example 2: Asking for Change

Example 3: Focusing on the Policymaker

Example 4: Serving As an Ambassador



Example 5: Demonstrating Community Impact

Some Thoughts

How organizations and coalitions can help you with your pitch:

They can identify if your elected officials have an influential role (e.g. committee member).

They can help you know what to ask for (e.g. what bills, etc.).

If you do not have statistics and other such talking points on hand, they can provide them for you.

None of this detracts from your value or voice as an advocate.

Your experiences and insights are the most valuable part of the pitch.

Next Steps: Story-telling Exercise

Strengthen APA's advocacy while building your narrative skills: we need to know what the youth mental health crisis looks like on the ground.

Share your experiences in our story portal to help elected officials craft effective policy solutions.

Ways to Engage with APA Advocacy

Visit the APA Services website to:

- See our current action alerts.
- Learn about issues we are working on.
- Read our priorities for this Congress.
- Sign up for the Psychology Advocacy Network and *Washington Update*.
- Learn about and apply for APA Executive Fellowships and Congressional Fellowships.

Keep an eye out for:

- Emails from your division leaders flagging opportunities with APA Advocacy.
- Action alert emails.
- APA calls to action on social media.

Reach out to APA Advocacy to request:

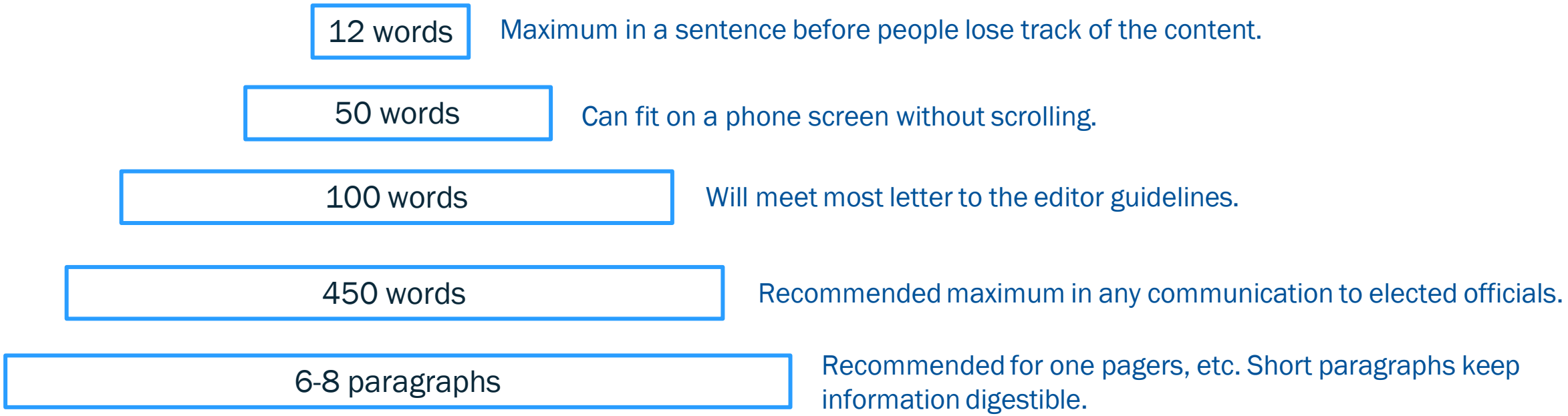
- Help if you want to directly connect with federal elected officials.
- Guidance on engaging with federal departments and agencies.
- Help on state-level issues.

Thank you!

Appendix

Message length guidelines
Sample pitch scripts

Recommended Message Lengths



Example 1: Seeking Mitigation / Prevention

During the pandemic, I have been able to support more patients by leveraging remote technology. That is because regulations on mental health services were relaxed. For example, for the past two years, I could offer phone meetings without having to require in-person follow up. That makes a big difference for some people.

One of my patients is a health worker struggling with everything she has seen during the pandemic. Her schedule is hectic, and she barely has time to meet, much less travel back and forth to my office. I saw you worked as a nurse before running for office, so you understand what the schedule can be like. Being able to call in from wherever she is means she doesn't have to sacrifice her well-being for that of her patients.

However, once the pandemic ends, many of these regulatory flexibilities will go away, unless the legislature acts now. But my patient will continue to have very long shifts after the pandemic ends. That is because her hospital is short-staffed. She told me that if we had to meet in person, she would not be able to get help as often as she needs it. We need more flexibility to meet patients like her where they are. This bill could help by making the temporary changes in regulations permanent. 100 mental health organizations back this approach. I can share a letter they cosigned with you if that is helpful. What are your thoughts on co-sponsoring this legislation?

Example 2: Asking for Change

I am one of two psychologists in my clinic who speaks Spanish, and we are desperately struggling to meet the needs of clients who do not speak English. It is heartbreaking to see our waiting list grow because we do not have enough staff to schedule appointments. Not having more diversity is having real-life implications for patients.

When patients have to describe their challenges in a language they are not fluent in, we might miss a key nuance or detail. That could affect the diagnosis and next steps we take.

This legislation can help by creating more diverse pipelines into psychology. In my clinic alone, one more Spanish-speaking psychologist would reduce our waiting list by 20 percent. That means fewer families struggling with hunger, because a parent is getting the treatment they need to stay in the workforce. More students in this district would be able to stay in school, because budding conditions could be identified before developing into a crisis.

What are your thoughts on introducing this legislation?

Example 3: Focusing on the Policymaker

We are facing a mental health crisis amongst youth. Right now, I am supporting a young woman who is struggling with depression. Even just to request a meeting with me, she struggled with months of self-doubt. She also did not know who to ask for help, or how to get it. Every day she was at risk of self-harm. Many adolescents do not get the help they need in time – in fact, we have seen a significant increase in the rate of teen suicide.

We are coming to you because as Chair of the Senate Finance committee, you are in unique position to work with your colleagues on a solution. Here is a list of policies developed by a mental health coalition to address youth mental health. Combined, they are estimated to reduce youth suicide by 25 percent within a year of implementation.

We would love your support to turn this into a reality. What would you need to know to work on this issue? What would you need from me to convince your colleagues?

Example 4: Serving As an Ambassador

I first became interested in helping people in my senior year of high school. A friend was having a really tough time after his parents divorced, but I could see how talking about it made him feel better. That sense of connection and helpfulness drove me to take an intro to psychology class in college. From there on out, I knew I had found my career.

But a PhD could mean a decade of balancing school with life in general, and accruing a huge amount of debt. I had to pay my own way during the entirety of my studies. The Psychology Entry Grants Program made a huge difference for me during that time. It gave paid training opportunities so I could build on my knowledge while earning a living. That helped me get past a big barrier to entry. I now lead a program that helps 1,500 people in rural communities every year.

There are plenty like me who could make a difference in peoples' lives, if they could only benefit from programs such as this one. This program now desperately needs funding. Do you think your office would be willing to support its renewal?

Example 5: Demonstrating Importance

The hospital I work at is the single largest employer for North County, and the only hospital within reach of Northeast and Northwest counties. This year alone, we supported 300 patients during mental health crises.

But our staff are burning out and some have left – if we cannot recruit more staff we might have to close our crisis program. This document lists two solutions that would help us retain staff and hire staff. With these policies, we can keep helping those 300 people, and maybe take on even more patients.

Would you be able to support these bills?

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