



TAKING ACTION TO EDUCATE, ENGAGE, AND ENERGIZE IN THE 2022 ELECTION

Elections are about electing candidates, but they also are about electing issues – both indirectly through electing candidates who support those issues and directly by raising the visibility and support for the issues.

The Iowa Helping Community Policy Group has taken action to **educate** those running for office on fundamental issues related the helping community workforce, **engage** them in presenting their own views on those issues, and **energize** them to speak out and act about their positions.

The Iowa Helping Community Policy Group also encourages everyone (you) who cares about the helping community to **educate** your peers and the public, **engage** them to look at the positions that candidates have on these issues, and **energize** them to consider how candidates stand on these issues when they vote. We all have influence and we all have people who will listen to what we have to say. The following are examples of what we each can do to elevate these issues so we do, in effect, elect the issues and the candidates who embrace them.

EDUCATE. The Iowa Helping Community Policy Group has a lot of information about the helping community and why and what public policies are important to strengthen them in their vital role – but everyone has their own stories to tell and ways to convey information. The Policy Group encourages people (you) to draw upon the resources we have provided in doing so but to express these in your own, unique, personal way. People, whether candidates or colleagues and friends, learn best when they hear from multiple people and sources, and particularly from those they know are knowledgeable about the issue at hand. You can educate others about the importance of supporting helpers as a public policy through meetings with candidates or sending them information, conversations with your colleagues and friends, and letters-to-the-editor or posts of information on social media. Particularly if you are in a helping occupation or receive such help and support, you can use your own story to educate.

The more voices that are sharing information about helpers in your own, genuine ways, the more we educate the public, candidates, and those they are seeking to represent.

ENGAGE. Engaging is about opening a dialogue and getting others to formulate and express their ideas. The Helping Community Policy Group has worked to directly engage candidates for public office through our candidate survey, webinars and summits, and other direct sharing of information with candidates. The Policy Group has also asked its member organizations to engage their memberships.

A great way for individuals to engage candidates is to attend their events, to participate in candidate forums hosted by others, or simply to write or email them expressing interest in their views. The questions in the survey can be contoured for such discussions.

Candidates should not be expected to be experts on these issues, but they can become ones if they hear often enough about them and realize their importance. Similarly, colleagues and friends cannot be expected to see the connection between their general valuing of helpers and their importance to society and the need for public policies and investments to support them. Engaging people in discussions helps them be more engaged themselves.

For candidates who have responded to the survey, starting with a “thank you” is a good way to get their attention. For senators who signed the concurrent resolution, thanking them is a way of reinforcing their prior support.

ENERGIZE. Energizing is about becoming an advocate and taking action and sharing the message. Most people and most candidates will not decide to make this their life mission. For many, having more knowledge and understanding and willingness to engage in discussions is enough. If people who are engaged become energized, that is even better.

In many respects, the most important way people (you) can share your energy is with others in your family, your friends, your colleagues, and your community. Writing letters-to-the-editor, raising issues while serving on boards or committees, and doing other public actions is important.

But elections and politics is about word-of-mouth, about conversations in coffee shops and on work breaks and at social gatherings. We all can help educate and engage others, and by our own energy build a broader base of support for policies that help helpers. Energy is contagious, and the more energy you show for ensuring that policy and politics invests in helpers and their essential role, the more energy others will have to do the same.