


INTHRIVE

ADVOCACY SOLUTIONS

Monthly Digest: February 2024
Your source for policy and advocacy guidance.

What's inside?

 Policy by FEAR or HOPE?

 Help getting your policy across the finish line

 Intro to the new General Assembly video

by **David Smith** on February 11, 2023

Last January & February I had a 9-5 job working for Del. Kaye Kory that I could leave at the office...except for all those wonderful receptions where I'd represent her! Now that I have my own firm and am hopping between Arizona and Virginia with [A More Just America](#) it's not quite as easy to sit down and write this newsletter. But, sharing what I've learned and seen to help you advocate more effectively for the policies you're passionate about is what I'm passionate about! Please accept this February 2024 edition a week and a half late but filled with a week and a half of extra knowledge!

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC

Winning Policy with Fear or Hope?



An article in *Discourse* caught my eye last month. In [“Is Policy Writing a Newscast or an Advertisement”](#) the author asks is policy making an act of fear (the “if it bleeds it leads” newspaper mentality) or hope (the aspirational hope of a better tomorrow seen in ads)? This struck me because though I am an optimistic person—I emphasize the positive, see the best in other people, and am generally hopeful about our future—my strategy to advance policy is built on problems. If you’ve ever watched any of my [“Better Advocacy in 10 Minutes or Less Videos”](#) you know my [“Two Step Method”](#) of policy advocacy focuses on a problem that needs to be solved. Even my optimistic self leads with fear!

As our media consumption has become more siloed, the fears that we consume are more tailored to our own fears and we get pulled in a downward despair spiral—which could be why people today are so pessimistic despite a strong economy and a time of peace (or at least wars where Americans are not in combat). Fear pervades our lives!

I see very few, if any, arguments for bills (policy ideas) that lead with hope, where the arguments “for” are aspirational. Instead we focus on “this is wrong and needs to be fixed.” Bills are a result of fear—we must change this law or small businesses won’t be able to thrive, we must limit this action or else our environment will be irreparably harmed. You get the idea. This is the way we think in politics—we lead by fear because fear is the great motivator. What would change if we led with hope and aspiration, like a feel-good Super Bowl commercial?

Pushing policy out of hope instead of fear won’t change our society’s worldview. But, it can have an impact on our political space and that can have an outsized impact on the way we see the world and our neighbors. I encourage you to think about the way you frame arguments with politicians, your base, and the general public. How can we be led less by fear and more by hope?

And I’ll see how I can reorient my “two-step method” away from fear and towards hope!

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🏁 State legislative sessions are in full swing! If you need extra support to get your your policy across the finish line Inthrive: Advocacy Solutions is here to **help you and your clients** have a winning session!

Email David Smith at David@InthriveAdvocacy.com to see how we can partner to achieve your goals.

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