

# INTHRIVE

## ADVOCACY SOLUTIONS

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

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- 📺 The most popular Better Advocacy in 10 Minutes or Less video ever!
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by **David Smith** on Aug 1, 2024

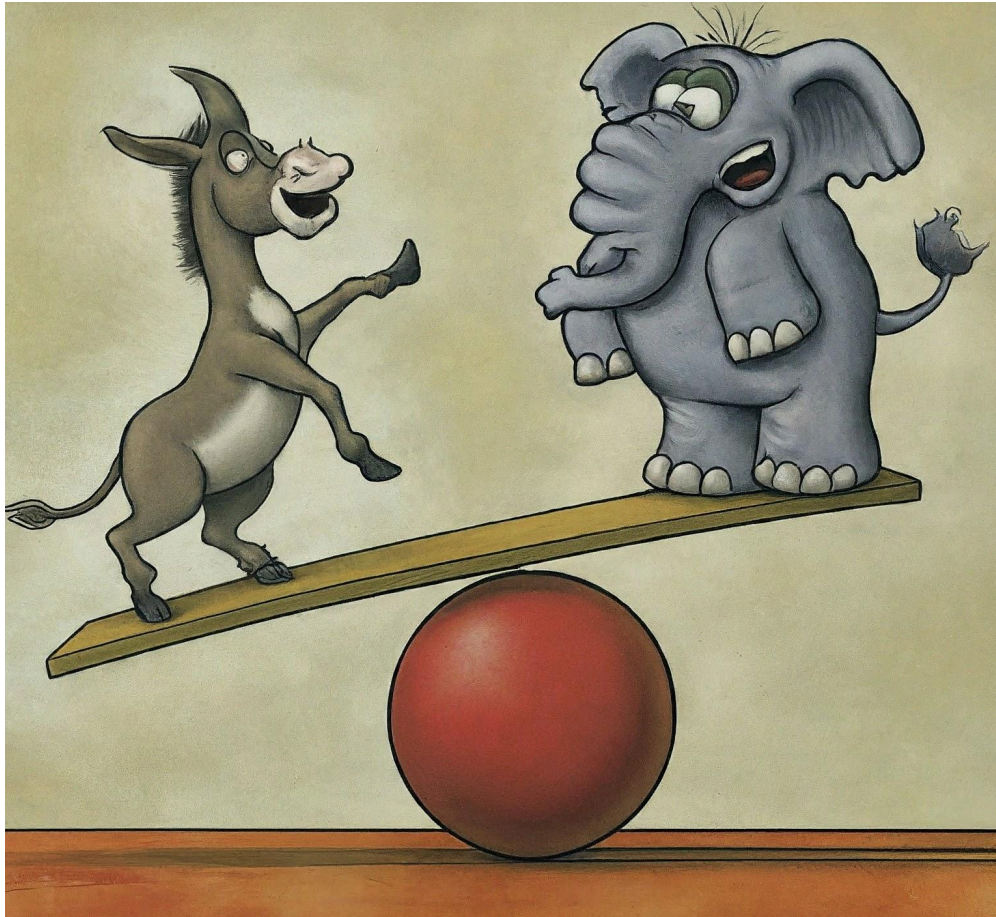
I got my start in lobbying and advocacy by organizing grassroots coalitions to work with elected officials. There was always a struggle to manage expectations so the passionate people I was working with wouldn't react in a way that hurt their cause if they didn't get the 100% win they were fighting for. I thought this passion was unique to the grassroots activist space until I started working with business clients. Yup, it was the same emotions but instead of the passion driven matching t-shirt world of grassroots activism it was the passion driven matching suit world of corporate government relations.

When working with all or nothing passion driven people, whether they're corporate clients or directly impacted families, how can we guide them so they see the balance between the ideal and the practical while fighting for the biggest win possible?

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC

## The Balance Between the Ideal & the Practical




Whether you're driven by passion for an impacted group or the pure desire not to lose, we all want the big win—the ideal policy. That's why we fight like we do. But we also know that a 100% victory isn't always possible. What do you do those times when what they want seems impossible with the current political climate? Here are 5 ways to manage expectations while still working to achieve victory, no matter how slim the chances.

1. **Set Realistic Expectations:** Clearly lay out why they shouldn't expect a 100% victory. Is it because there's strong opposition—either grassroots or in the administration? Is it because the legislature just took action last year and there isn't the appetite to revisit it so quickly? At the same time show what you believe is achievable. *You're not telling the client "no," you're showing them why this task is so hard and why it's so important that they have you on their team.*
2. **Paint the Big Picture:** The problem you're working to solve didn't arise in one legislative session (usually) so don't expect it to be solved in one legislative session. Help them to see the bigger picture, whether that's political, systematic, or cultural, that's working against you and their goals. Show them how this may be multi-year policy work, not a simple one session job.

3. **Find Ways to Exceed Expectations:** Just because their ask will be difficult to achieve doesn't mean you're not going to go all in to surpass the expectations you so carefully set. Show them how you're going to attack this difficult task. Be creative about expanding your coalition, finding the right champions in the House and Senate, and coming up with novel ways of framing the problem and solution that cross traditional partisan divides.
4. **Ensure that Leaders are Included:** If you're able to show the leadership of the group you're working with early on how difficult the task is that they've asked for they'll have a better understanding of what you're up against. Show them polling, voting records, etc. that layout the difficult playing field you're on. When the leadership understands what you're up against they are more likely to be understanding if you don't get a 100% victory in year one.
5. **Tell yourself that the 100% victory is possible:** *Don't talk yourself out of getting a full win!* You didn't get into this work to accept a partial policy change and then walk away. Create a plan that leads to victory and follow it through.

Sometimes we get that unexpected win-the stars align, you fly in under the radar, or some outside event completely changes the playing field. Celebrate and relish those surprising wins-which are all the sweeter when you'd be preparing your team for a less than ideal result!

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 If you're looking for a new partnership to help achieve your policy goals email David Smith at [David@InthriveAdvocacy.com](mailto:David@InthriveAdvocacy.com) to see how we can work together to get that win!


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### **Policy pieces on LinkedIn**

[C3's & Lobbying: 2 Lies & a Truth](#)


[The Deadly Problem of Solitary Confinement in Virginia's Local & Regional Jails](#)


### **What's new in "Better Advocacy in 10 Minutes or Less"?**

 Follow Inthrive on [YouTube](#) to keep your skills fresh with Better Advocacy in 10 Minutes or Less! My most popular video ever just dropped, [click here to see what everyone is watching!](#) You can also check out new videos on [speaking with the press](#), [policy position letters](#), and [3 must do's when speaking with legislators](#).

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### **Where can you meet Inthrive: Advocacy Solutions?**

 **Inthrive Film Festival:** Saturday, August 3 from noon to 5pm at Southside Virginia Community College in Alberta, VA. [More information here.](#)

 [NIJ National Research Conference](#): Inthrive will be exhibiting from September 16 to 18 in Pittsburgh to show folks how they can use their tax exempt funds to (*legally*) lobby Congress & state legislatures.

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