

2018 Conference

written by Fred | July 25, 2018

Advocacy in Action presents a bipartisan look behind the scenes of the state legislature, concluding in a mock judiciary committee hearing in front of two esteemed Ohio senators. Barb Wright offers testimony in favor of legislation to establish a petition for youthful offenders for removal from the register, and Wendy Tarr offers testimony in opposition to the violent offender registry as originally introduced in Ohio. Although both bills are real, the mock hearing focuses on the process, not the substance, of advocating for reform. A Q&A period follows, allowing the audience to ask the senators and panelists questions about the process. The hearing is conducted by Senator Eklund, sitting as the Chairman of the Mock Committee. Senator Eklund is a well-respected and influential legislator in the area of criminal justice reform. Senator Eklund was a member of the Ohio Criminal Justice Recodification Committee and is the primary sponsor of bills to modify criminal sentencing and corrections law.

Nolder and Wilt present a seasoned lobbyist's view of the discussion started during the Advocacy in Action session, with a basic discussion of how a bill becomes a law, coalition building, building a relationships with lawmakers, and strategies for advocacy.

Asking for criminal justice reform that assists individuals convicted of a crime is not a politically popular position. In order to achieve change, advocates must earn the trust of lawmakers and provide them with convincing arguments. This presentation shows how to establish productive relationships with lawmakers and present arguments that they will find compelling.

The landmark decisions in *State v. Bodyke* and *State v. Williams* returned thousands of Megan's law registrants to the classification that existed prior to the enactment of the Adam Walsh Act. But in the years that followed, inconsistencies and uncertainties flourished, making registration duties confusing for all registrants, regardless of when they were convicted. Attorney Jeffrey Gamso's workshop provides answers to the question NARSOL has been asking all year: Can They Do That?

The basis for litigation reform and the results of civil rights litigation vary widely from state to state and jurisdiction to jurisdiction. This presentation examines a number of challenges from the past couple of years and seeks to understand the key constitutional arguments that have been made, what has been successful, and the reason why there are such disparate results between states and circuits.

John came from a challenging background, but has risen above to become a leading figure in second chance employment, including employment for registrants. John discusses *Thinking Outside the Box*, including such topics as *Dispelling the Myths*, *Dismantling the Fears*, *Discerning the Talent*, *Disseminating the Message*, and *Deploying the Community*. Having an effective message is one of the most difficult tasks in any type of social reform, and having the wrong message can be disastrous for any movement. An effective message can change the conversation from one of "us versus them" and instead focus the conversation on common values.

Dann brings to NARSOL his unique knowledge of the forces leading to adoption of the Adam Walsh Act in Ohio. Ohio was the first of eighteen states to adopt the Adam Walsh Act. Dann now regrets his role in the adoption of the AWA and discusses ways in which other states can avoid the politics behind the Adam Walsh Act and other sex offender registration laws.

Talking about registrants and framing questions concerning sex offender policy are complex and divisive. This talk addresses the challenges involved with driving change, without fracturing coalitions, through media, including journalism and films. The presentation also includes the showing of two of Feige's short films dispelling the myths of sex offender recidivism and showing the devastating effects of life on the registry.

Recently, there have been some very good judicial decisions affirming the rights of registered citizens. But while optimism for the future is appropriate, we must also temper it with caution. Bad cases make bad law. In this presentation, Attorney Paul Dubbeling discusses what legal and legislative challenges are the most likely to succeed so that we can establish winning strategies to pursue effectual change. With careful evaluation and strategy, we can set concrete, achievable goals that will advance the cause of this advocacy today and in the critical years to come.