
The Importance of Storytelling:

Connecting Statistics and Stories for Action



PRESENTERS



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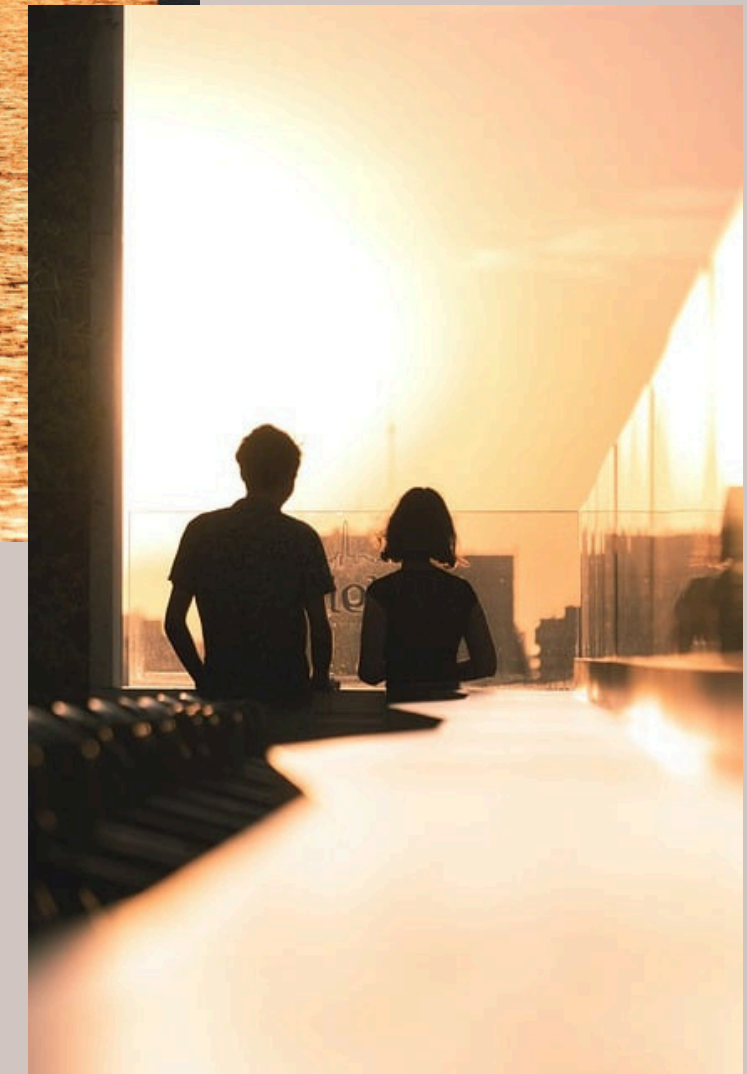


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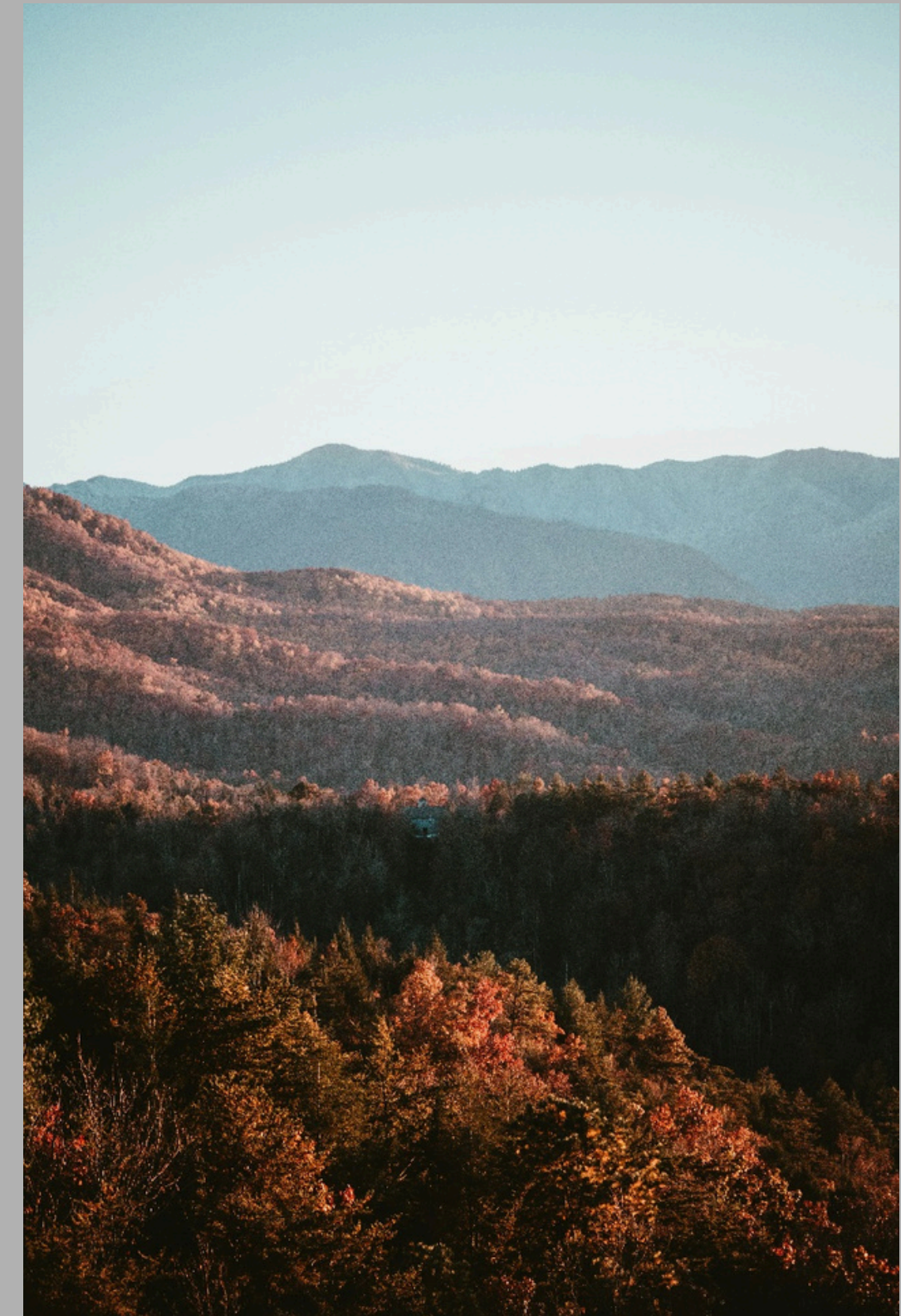
Think of an Impactful Story you Heard

- **Who was the storyteller?**
- **When/where did you hear the story?**
- **What made it impactful for you?**



Why personal stories?

- **Educate others on the topic**
- **Make policy real**
- **Push people to act**
- **Empower storytellers**
- **Provides a hook for media**
- **Short & Impactful**

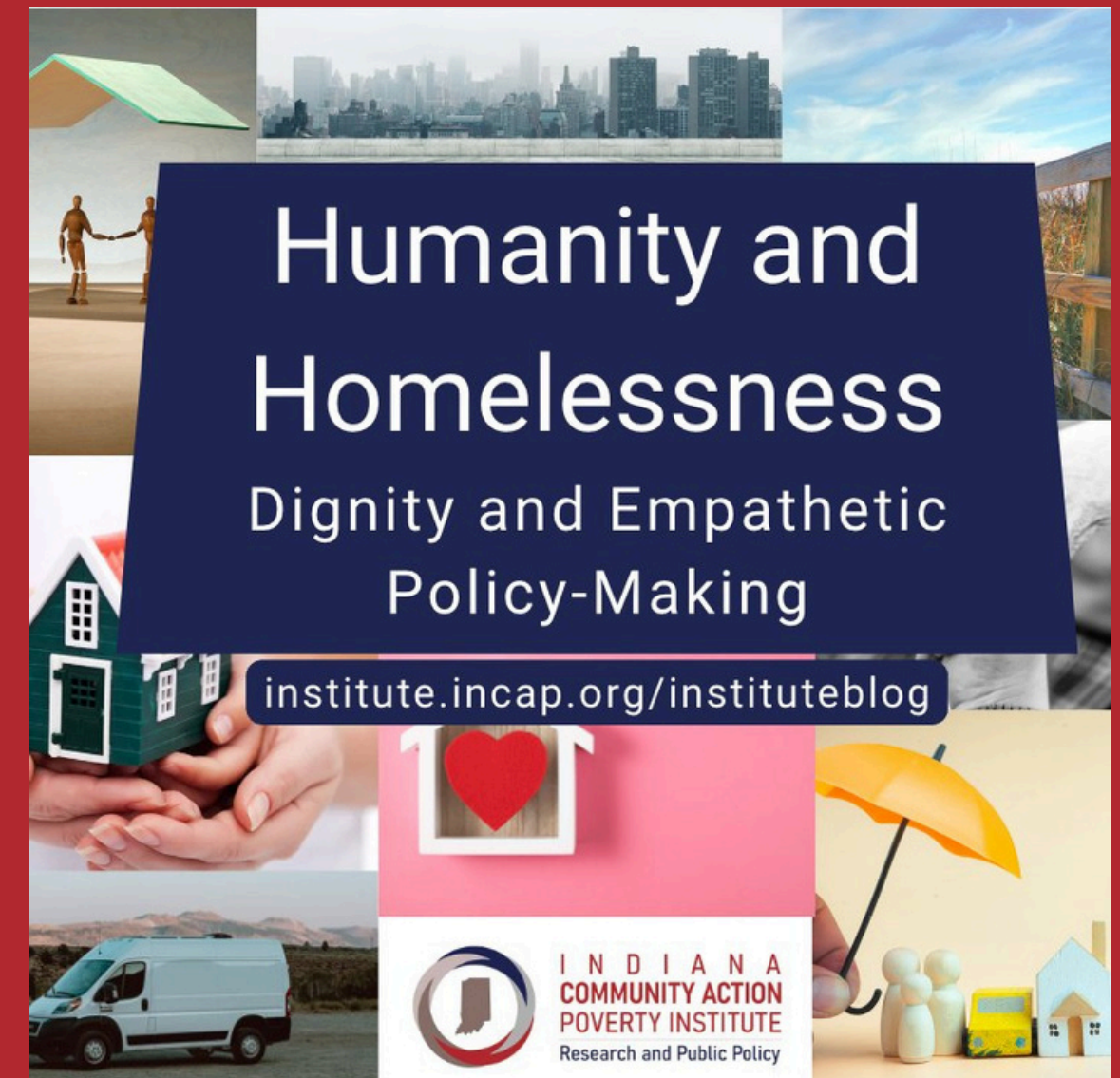


Would You Rather?

- **Would you rather share your story in front of an audience of 1,000 engaged people, or meet with one opposing combative lawmaker?**
- **Would you rather share your story with 12 distracted lawmakers who are undecided or one engaged opposing lawmaker?**



Building up Storytellers: SIMON fellow Sarah



WHAT IS A STORY



Key to an Impactful Story- The Layout



CHARACTER(S)

- **Background**
- **Credibility**
- **Reliability**
- **Connection to topic**

STORY

- **Start**
- **Peak**
- **Outcome**

MORAL

- **Why does your story matter?**
-

Rhetorical Appeal



***Seek to use all three components.**

Ethos Character or credibility

- It uses your connection to the argument.

Pathos Emotion

- It uses stories, and words that trigger emotions.

Logos Logic

- It uses statistics, data, and quotes (gives context).

Character Assessment

- Where are you/they from?
- Who are you/they?
- What makes you/them credible?
- What makes you/them relatable?
- What is your/their connection to the topic?



Story Formation

START

Growing up low-income on TANF

PEAK

New restrictions on TANF led to family losing access to assistance

OUTCOME

Placed family in greater economic hardship – no family should go hungry

Use Vivid Details

WHAT STANDS
OUT?

**Things you remember the
most from your
experience**

**ARE THEIR ANY
"UNIVERSAL
MOMENTS" ?**

**"Home should be a safe
place."**

**"No one should go without a
home."**

WHAT ARE THE
EMOTIONS?

**Should move not
overwhelm**

**Should express the
feelings of that experience**

What is the Moral?

THE "WHY"

Connect your story with real-life current conditions/ impacts and a moral call to address these issues.

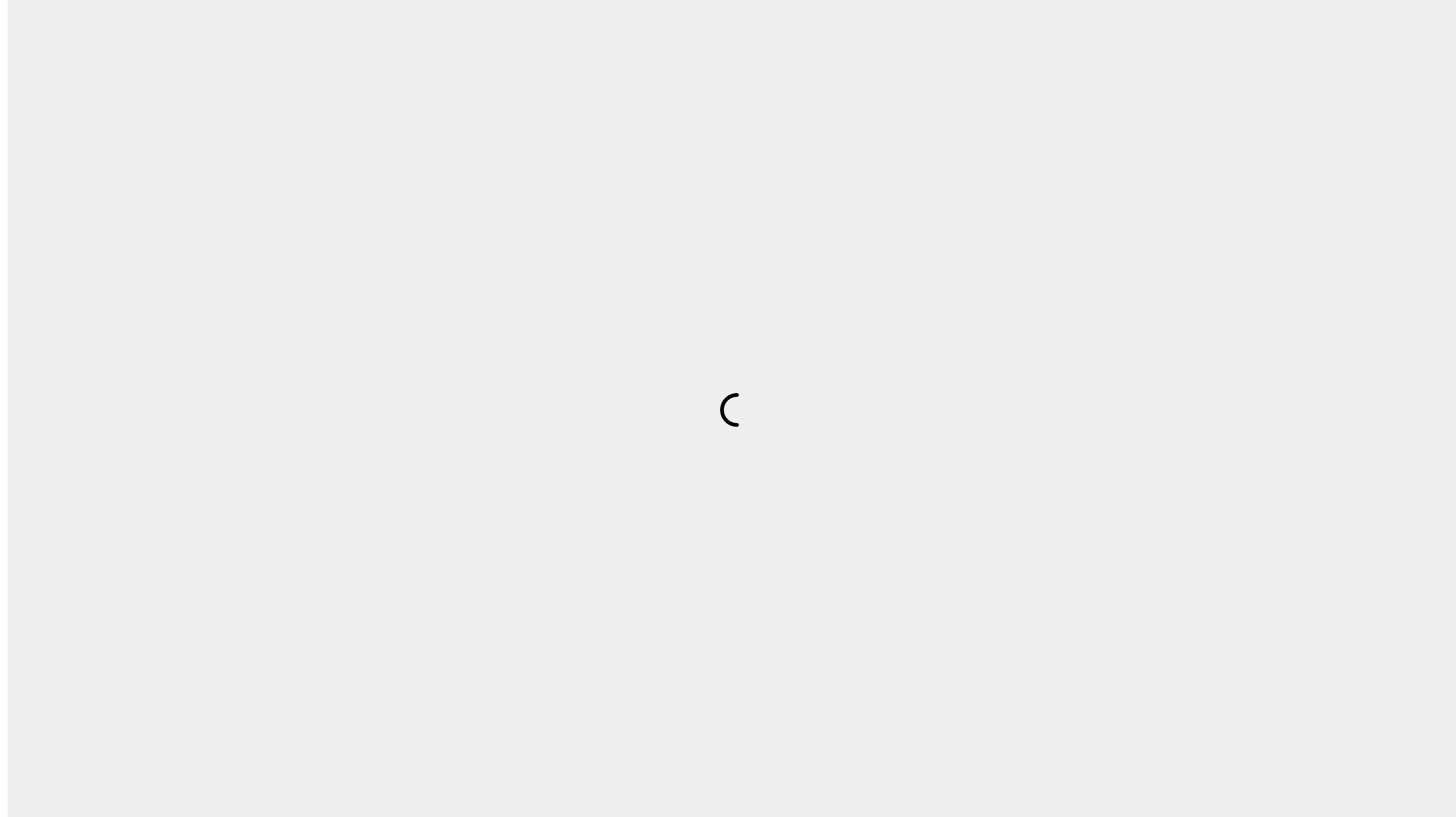
BACK UP YOUR WHY

Provide education and research as to why the topic you're speaking on is important, and they should pay attention.

Story in Action

Stories to make change and engagement with decision makers

STORYTELLER EXAMPLE – AND TO BREAK IT APART



Discussion Questions

- What stood out the most for you?
- Did you hear ethos, pathos and logos used? (credibility, emotion, statistics)
- What was the start, peak, and outcome?



Speaking with Policy makers

"Hearing from all sides" How legislative testimony influences state level policy-makers in the United States

- 862 out of 1,719 legislators contacted completing the survey (11% of US legislators)
- 46% Democrat; 52.6% Republican;
- Phone interviews Mixed- method survey, open- and close-ended questions
- Survey instrument asked: where legislators go for information, how they prefer to receive it, (and their policy priorities)

How does testimony in committee hearing influence your decisions about policy?

- **81.3% of legislators implied that testimony at least somewhat influenced policy-making.**
- **Three categories within these responses reflect different types of influence:**
 - **Very Influential (11.9%)**
 - **Somewhat Influential (51.0%),**
 - **Contingent Influence (18.3%)**
 - **Not Influential during policy-making (2.2%)**
 - **16.5% did not clearly state whether or not testimony influences policy-making (e.g., some legislators' responses included contradictory statements).**

Ways legislators were influenced by testimony

- **Increased awareness**
- **Decision-making**
- **Writing or amending legislation**
- **Talking with colleagues**
- **Supporting or advocating**
- **Cause them to conduct research**

***However, very few legislators in the sample reported that testimony affects their vote on legislation.**

What about the testimony affects its influence on you?

- **Characteristics of the presenter (e.g., the presenter's background) were mentioned most often by respondents.**
 - **Credible or knowledgeable expert in their field**
 - **Characteristics of the testimony content (e.g., the nature and type of information presented) credible content and sharing data enhanced the influence of testimony.**
- **Characteristics of the presentation itself also affected the influence of testimony.**
 - **Presentation design and delivery enhanced the influence of testimony. (organized format, visual aids, or take-home handouts)**

Community Action Client Needs



Top 5 Needs

- Housing assistance
- Food assistance
- Good jobs with higher wages and benefits
- Transportation support
- Mental health and/or counseling

*Debt relief (medical)

*Childcare

Back of House/ Outside of session Storytelling

Sharing your story directly with a decision maker(s)

How Do You Prepare?



**Who will you be
engaging?**



**What will you engage
them on?**



**What is the goal of your
engagement?**

Prep: Who Are You Engaging?

Do Your Research

- **Background on the person**
 - **Their positions, events they attended – potential values**
 - **What groups do they engage with the most?**
 - **Determine format for making contact & engagement**
 - **Legislative assistant, secretary etc.**
 - **In-person scheduling, email, calling**
 - **Consider location– could it help reinforce your point, credibility etc.**
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Example: Select-Fort Wayne, Local Decision Makers

Sharon Tucker – 6th District



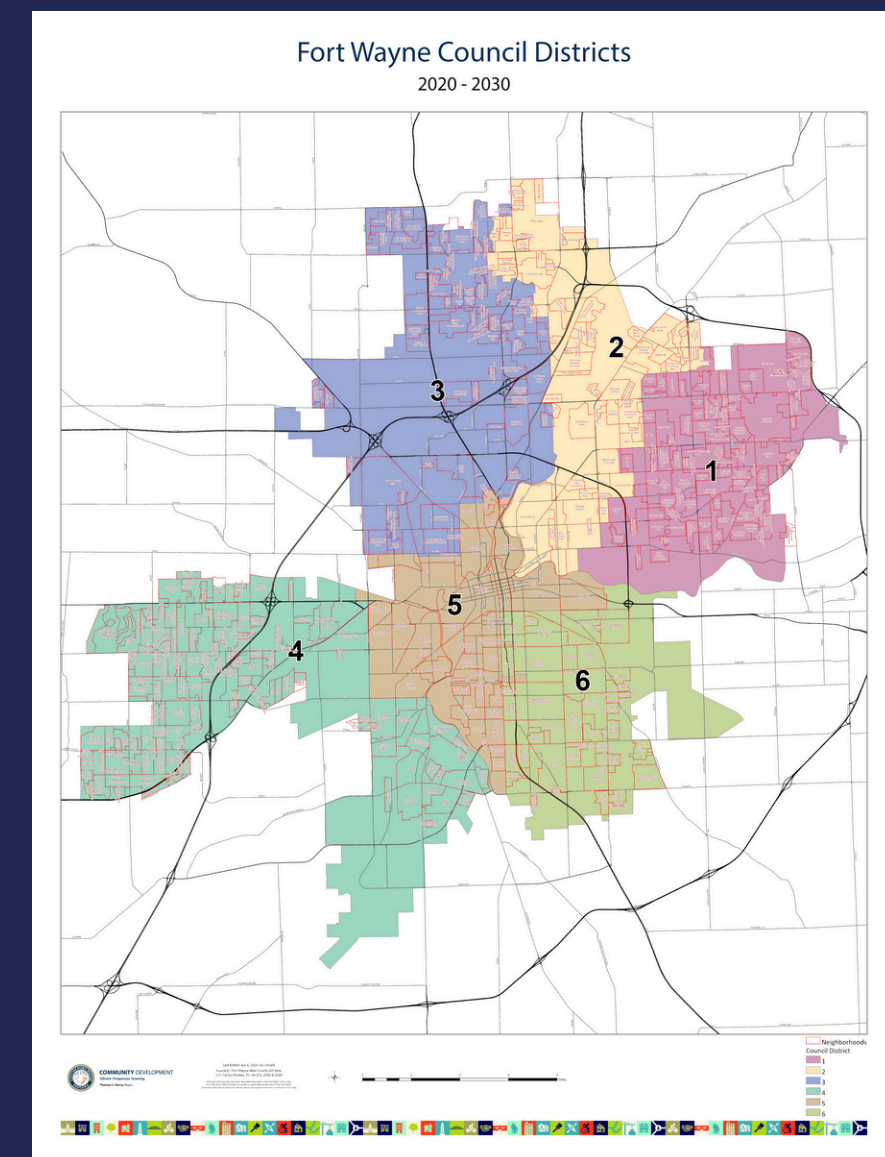
Nathan Hartman - 3rd District



Dr. Scott Myers - 4th District



- Important to know faces & names!
- Possible you can run into people in town and not even know it–informal connection opportunities
- Note: Sharon Tucker is now Mayor of Fort Wayne



Prep: What Will You Engage with Them On?

- **Define Your Topic**
 - **State this up front!**
- **Prepare materials – relevant stories & stats**
 - **Bring supportive handouts- best practice is less than two pages**
- **Keep Your Scope In Mind:**
 - **More narrow – fewer topics = More in-depth conversation on that specific thing.**
 - **Broader – more topics= Attention is spread out.**

***NOTE: You will need to have this defined before scheduling a meeting**

Prep: What is the Goal of Your Engagement?

- **What do you hope to come out of the conversation?**
 - **Better understanding of your work/program**
 - **Awareness of community concerns on XYZ**
 - **Relationship building, connection with you and trust in your expertise**
 - **Willingness to engage with you on addressing XYZ**
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THINK ABOUT



Who is your decision maker?



What topic/concern/issue would you focus on with your decision maker?



What would be your end goal of your engagement?

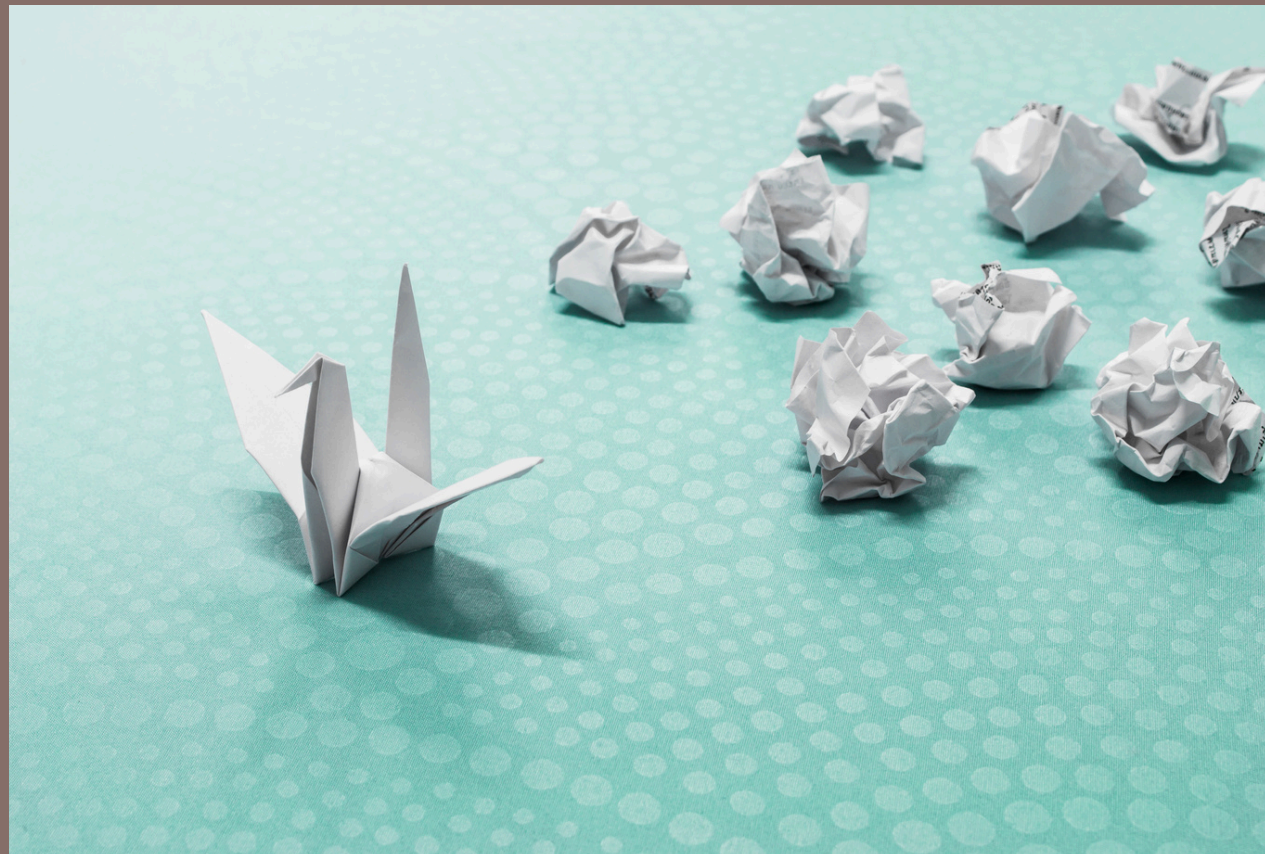
In Practice

Start:

- Remember your why- kick it off with that!
- If first engagement prepare for QUESTIONS!
 - From them- You may get many questions that may seem basic to you
 - From you- Come with questions to have an open conversation

- Build up rapport and reputation – if you express interest in them as a person, they are more likely to do the same to you
 - *"Why did you get into politics?"*
 - *"What sort of things are you most interested in working on?"*
- **End:**
 - Positive note- thank them for their time.

Best Practice for 1:1 Engagement



- Engage with your decision makers ideally outside of high stressful times
 - Helps build a relationship
 - Invite to them a tour, presentation, or engagement opportunity
 - Have information ready to hand off – keep to 2 pages if possible
 - **Consistent engagement is key**- it's a relationship like any other
 - Give thanks
 - Follow up
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Practice Your Story

- **Share with others it helps with:**
 - **Nervousness**
 - **Find ways to improve your points**
 - **Empowers others**
- **Think of ways you can incorporate these skills into your work.**



Be Sure to Stay Engaged!

- **Stay informed about what the Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute (INCAP) is doing and the storytellers we are engaging!**



“Stories are a communal
currency
of humanity.”

— Tahir Shah