

The Legislative Visit

Presentation by
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And

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At

RAISE Florida Network

First Quarter Regional Meeting

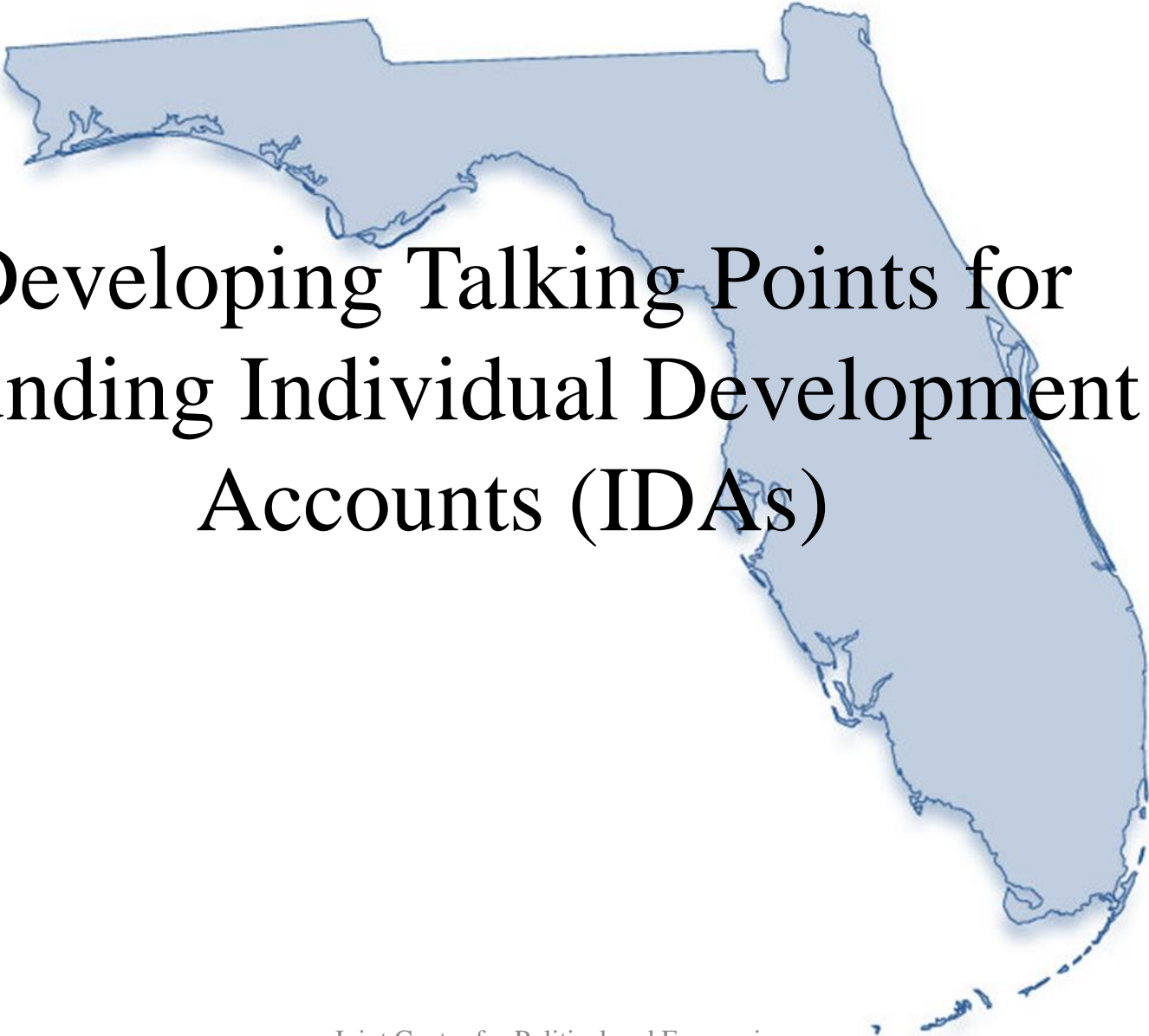
Tallahassee, Florida

March 13, 2013



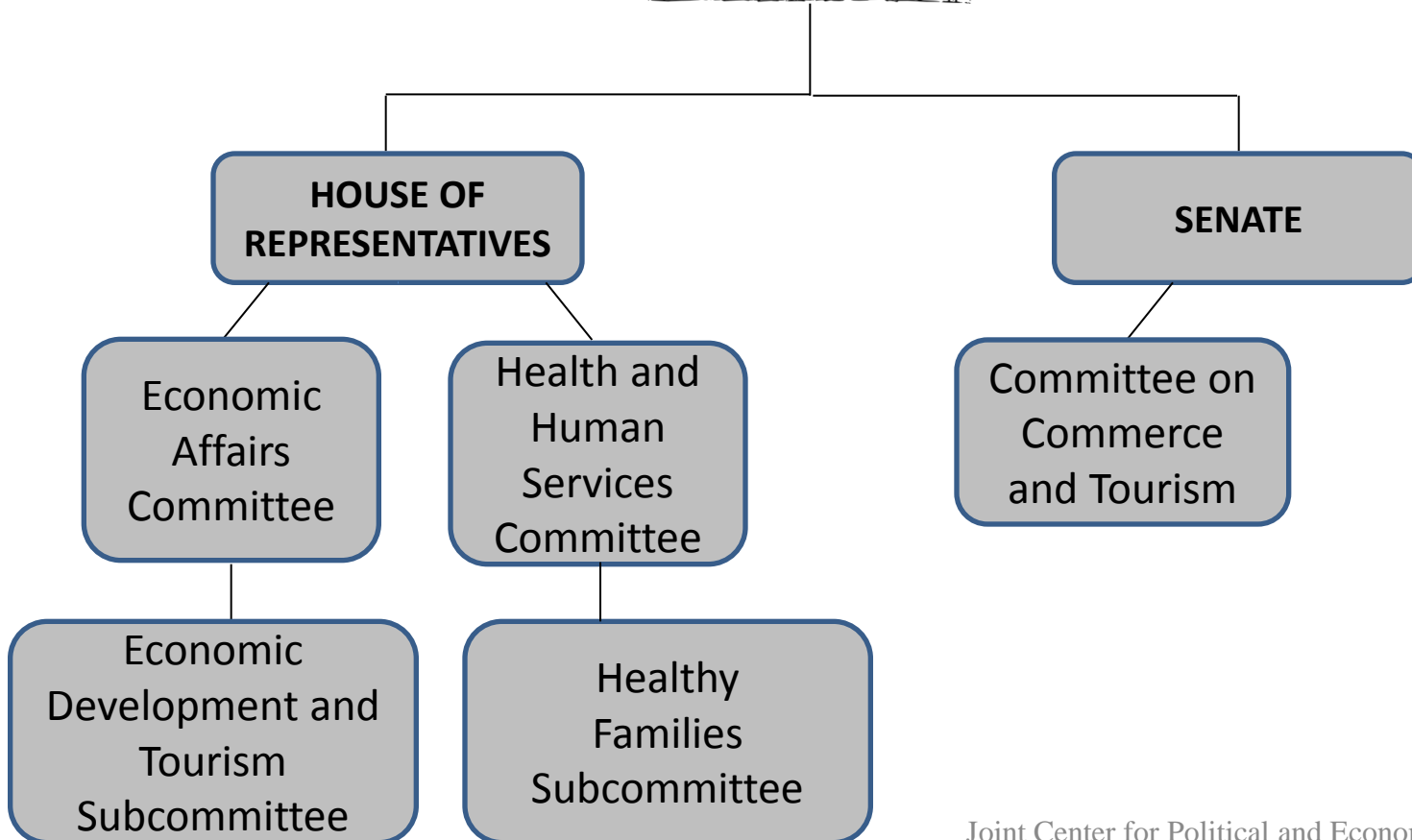
Steps for a Successful Legislative Visit

- Research the member's background and characteristics of their district
- Determine the strategy for approaching the legislator about your issue of interest
- Develop talking points for the visit
- Follow up after the visit



Developing Talking Points for Funding Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)

IDA Funding: Relevant Committees



- # Summarize Relevant Facts About IDA Funding

- IDAs are matched savings accounts that help low income individuals build savings and acquire assets.
- In the state of Florida, the use of money saved in IDAs is restricted to the following:
 - post secondary education or job training
 - first time homeownership
 - microenterprise development

Summarize Relevant Facts About IDA Funding (cont'd)

- Florida has a voluntary IDA program that is administered by the state's Regional Workforce Boards (RWB).
 - Currently none of the RWB administer an IDA program.
- Once established, IDA programs in Florida can get matching funds from the TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) and welfare-to-work programs.
- Encouraging all RWB to administer IDA programs that tap into these dedicated funding streams will help a greater number of low-income people accumulate assets and become self-sufficient.

Assess Relevant Facts About the Legislator and the District Represented

Rep. Alan B. Williams (D-08)

- Rep. Williams is a member of the Economic Affairs Committee, the House committee that considers all matters related to workforce development.
- The 8th District contains all of Gadsden County -- the Florida county with the largest proportion of people with incomes below the federal poverty threshold (nearly 28 percent).
- Rep. Williams is the Democratic Whip, a leadership position in the House.



State District – 08

Florida House of Representatives

County Characteristics

Gadsden County	
Median Income	\$33,453
People In Poverty	27.6%
Black Population	56%
Latino Population	9.5%
Foreclosure Rate	1 in every 626 housing units

Leon County	
Median Income	\$45,827
People in Poverty	22%
Black Population	30.3%
Latino Population	5.6%
Foreclosure Rate	1 in every 972 housing units

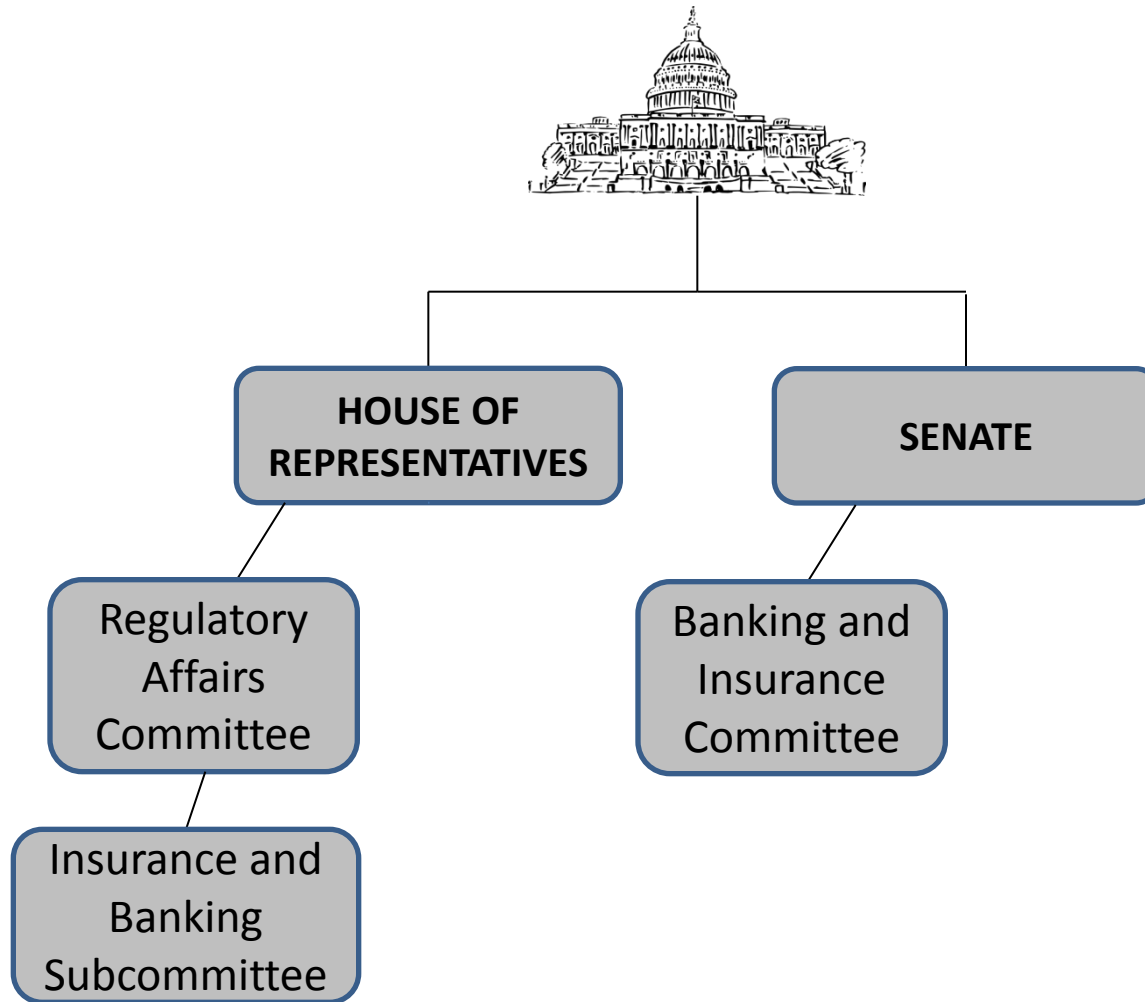
Use Facts to Develop Talking Points

- Introductory Sentence =
- IDA-related Sentence(s) =
- Legislator/District Sentence(s) =
- Closing =



Developing Talking Points for Foreclosure Abatement

Foreclosure Abatement: Relevant Committees



Facts About Foreclosure in Florida

- Florida has the highest rate of foreclosures in the country.
- For the past several years, we have seen legislation filed attempting to address the foreclosure crisis, but nothing has passed.
- This year, the legislature is considering HB 87 and SB 1666, companion bills that expedite the foreclosure process.

Positive Steps to Address the Foreclosure Crisis

- Support a Florida Homeowner Bill of Rights, HB 1177.
- Four Senate bills speak to helping homeowners before foreclosure, during the foreclosure and after the foreclosure.
- Next year seeking legislation to reduce predatory home loans – avoid racial steering that impacted African Americans and Latinos.

Assess Relevant Facts About the Legislator and the District Represented

Rep. Barbara Watson (D-107)

- Rep. Watson is a member of the Regulatory Affairs Committee, the House committee that has jurisdiction over regulation of the insurance and banking industries in Florida.
- Part of the county with the second highest foreclosure rate (Miami-Dade County) in the state is located in the 107th district.
- Many of the residents of the 107th District are African American (57 percent) and Hispanic (22 percent), two populations that are disproportionately affected by foreclosures in the state.



State District – 107

Florida House of Representatives

County Characteristics

Broward County (2011)	
Median Household Income	\$51,782
People In Poverty	13%
Black Population	27.4%
Latino Population	25.8%
Foreclosure Rate	1 in every 261 housing units

Miami-Dade County (2011)	
Median Household Income	\$43,957
People In Poverty	17.9%
Black Population	19.3%
Latino Population	64.5%
Foreclosure Rate	1 in every 208 housing units

Use These Facts to Develop Talking Points

- Introductory Sentence =
- Foreclosure Sentence(s) =
- Legislator/District Sentence(s) =
- Closing =

Follow-Up After the Legislative Visit



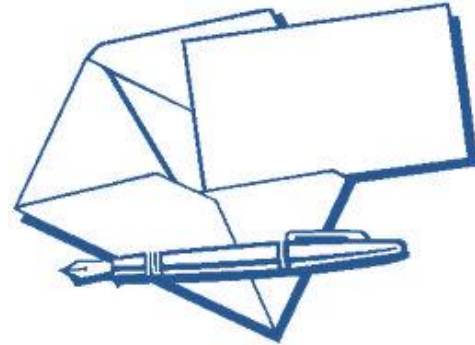
Tips for Personal Visits



- Be punctual, brief and succinct
- Emphasize concerns relevant to the member's district
- Know how to handle a “difficult” question
- Ask directly for the member's support
- Follow-up with a “thank-you” letter and any information requested by the member

Source: *Guide for Effective Meetings with Members of Congress*, by the National School Boards Association, available at www.nsba.org/Advocacy/Write-to-Congress/AGuideforEffectiveMeetingswithMembersofCongress.html

Tips For Writing To Your Legislator



- Be brief
- Focus on one issue per communication
- Clearly state your position on the issues
- Be specific about your request
- Always say “Thank you”

Source: *Tips for Contacting Legislators*, by the Delaware Division of the Arts, available at http://www.artsdel.org/advocacy/Tips_for_Contacts_with_Legislators.pdf

Date _____ [Logo]

The Honorable (Representative's name)
Florida House of Representatives
The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear Representative _____,

.....

OR

The Honorable (Senator's name)
Florida Senate
The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Dear Senator _____,

.....

**Sample
'Thank you'
Letter
Address**

[Logo]

Date

The Honorable Tom Jones
Florida House of Representatives
The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear Representative Jones,

I would like to express my appreciation for the opportunity to meet with you when I was in Tallahassee, Florida *[on date]*. I know you are very busy, and I am grateful that you made time to talk with me about *[state the issue discussed]*.

You will recall that we discussed *[describe the key “asks” discussed, e.g. funding for IDA programs, foreclosure abatement, eliminating predatory lending, or other issues]*.

[Highlight how the member’s action or support will resolve a specific issue in the member’s district.]

[If you promised to follow up with anything, provide it here or state that it is attached.]

I look forward to working with you and your dedicated staff to improve the quality of life of the residents of district _____. In the meantime, if I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

[Your name, title, and organization]

Sample ‘Thank you’ Letter

Outline



Long Noses of America

March 04, 2013

The Honorable Martin Gepetto
Florida Senate
The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Dear Senator Gepetto,

I would like to express my appreciation for the opportunity to meet with you when I was in Tallahassee, Florida, on March 1, 2013. I know you are very busy, and I am grateful that you made time to talk with me about increasing public safety in the 24th district.

You will recall that we discussed changing the color of Pinocchio's nose to purple. By supporting this effort you will reduce pedestrian accidents and increase public safety for the residents of your district because drivers will smile more and drive safer.

I look forward to working with you and your dedicated staff to improve the quality of life of the residents of district 24. In the meantime, if I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jiminy Cricket
Chairman
Long Noses of America

Sample 'Thank you' Letter