



Title	Political Advocacy
Created by	Lisa Handelman, The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, in collaboration with the staff from RespectAbility http://respectabilityusa.com/
Audience	Youth group directors, Men’s Clubs, Sisterhoods, and Educators
Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer with internet access • “Steps to Get Involved” worksheet with pens/pencils (see below) • Flip chart with magic markers
Program Description	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pass out “Steps to Get Involved” worksheet (see below) 2. Explain that while we are using materials prepared by RespectAbility, the steps we are learning today can be used with data collected from a variety of sources. 3. Step One – Identify the problem. The goal is to move from abstract ideals to concrete, observable actions. On the first page of the flip chart write: “To advance inclusion of individuals with disabilities, I want my political representative to ____.” As a group brainstorm answers to fill in the blank (for example, ‘talk more about this issue’, ‘support employment initiatives’, ‘vote for specific legislation’ etc.) Pick one suggestion from the brainstorming activity such as ‘talk more about this issue’ to use as an example. Ask everyone to write this on his or her worksheet. 4. Step Two – Do your homework. When advocating, it is important to know the issues and to know your representatives’ track record on the issue. For this example, we are going to look at the Nonpartisan Political Commentary Report prepared by RespectAbility. (http://therespectabilityreport.org/) to get an idea of who is talking about this issue. You can also look up information about a specific candidate starting with the candidate’s homepage or use RespectAbilities toolkit for policy makers. (http://respectabilityusa.com/resources/for-policy-makers/) Using the example of ‘talk more about this issue’, everyone should decide how a specific candidate is doing. Write notes on the worksheet under step two. 5. Step Three - Make it yours: why is this important to you. Turn to a partner and talk about why it is important to you that candidates talk about this issue. Personal and specific stories about you, friends and family members are powerful. Share some of the stories as a group. On the worksheet, write down notes about a story that shows why this is important to you. 6. Step Four - Create a plan and go for it. Decide on an action plan. Do you want to write your representative a letter, (even a thank-you letter is helpful), write an article for your school, congregation, or local newspaper, use social media to get the word out? Write down your ideas and find others in the group to collaborate with. (When you are ready to take this to the next level see the media webinar from RespectAbility - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=upxQkNoYHEM)

