



AHEAD Advocacy Presentation

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AHEAD Government Affairs Representatives

Presentation Overview

- PART I: SECTION 504 REGULATIONS UPDATE
- PART II: ADVOCACY 101 BASICS
- PART III: ABOUT AHEAD'S ADVOCACY WORK

Part I: 504 Update – Issue Background

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 has not been updated for Higher Education since its passage.
- In May 2022, the US Department of Education asked for written comments on how to improve the current Section 504 regulations.
- Despite that, as of today, the Administration has yet to release a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), the official document that outlines the Department's plan to achieve this goal.
- This NPRM was supposed to be released in August 2023

Part I: 504 Update – AHEAD’s Actions

AHEAD has engaged in a direct pressure campaign on the Department of Education to release updated Section 504 guidance.

To do this, AHEAD:

- Met with White House and Depts. of Education and Justice officials
- Educated and organized key Members of Congress, resulting in Members making direct contact with and sending a letter to the Biden Administration calling for swift action to update Section 504
 - This letter was led by Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and Adam Schiff (D-CA) and signed by 15 Members of Congress

Part I: 504 Update – AHEAD’s Actions (cont.)

- Sent letters on behalf of AHEAD members at 302 institutions of higher education to Administration officials and
- Led a coalition of 19 national organizations in sending a letter to the Administration and mobilizing their memberships to advocate for Section 504 reforms
- Hosted a Call-to-Action Webinar for over 600 AHEAD members to engage the Departments and the White House directly

Part I: 504 Update – Next Steps

Continue regular meetings with stakeholders and our 504 Coalition members to maintain grassroots momentum

Work with our Congressional partners to keep a spotlight on this issue for the Administration

Stay engaged with the Departments of Education and Justice and the White House

Part II: Advocacy 101 Basics

Levels

Engagement forms and levels

Federal

- Congress (Senators, Representatives, staffers, committees)
- Administration (President, secretaries, departments (CDC), offices (SBA))

State

- Legislatures (assembly, house, senate, general assembly, delegates, etc.)
- Administration (Governor, cabinet secretaries, departments, offices, boards of education)
- State-level organizations and coalitions, including state chapters of national organizations

Local

- City hall
- Education board
- Mayor

Campus

- Board of Trustees
- College President
- Faculty, Departments, and student organizations

Part II: Advocacy 101 Basics

Key Terms

- Act
- Bill
- Earmark
- Grant
- Rule

Part II: Advocacy 101 Basics

Government Affairs and Policy

- **What is Government Affairs?**
 - Informing
 - Relationships
 - Influencing policies, regulations, and action
- **What is Policy?**
 - Not just legislation, but involves ALL government actions

Part II: Advocacy 101 Basics

The Importance of Government Affairs & Advocacy

- Why are government affairs and advocacy important?
 - Provides an opportunity to influence
 - Proactive, not just reactive
 - Can create revenue and funding streams
 - Advances AHEAD's mission through affecting government policies

Part II: Advocacy 101 Basics: Advocacy vs. Lobbying

How are advocacy and lobbying different?

- **Advocacy** is an individual or group activity that aims to influence decisions within political, economic, and social institutions.
- **Lobbying** is the act of lawfully attempting to influence the actions, policies, or decisions of government officials, most often legislators or members of regulatory agencies, but also judges of the judiciary.

Part II: Advocacy 101 Basics

Lobbying do's and don'ts

- **NOT lobbying**
 - Educating/Sharing experiences for example
 - Answering questions
- **Lobbying** - Asking for something not normally provided by the government
- **When lobbying** - Check with your institution's counsel and government affairs office
- **Personal lobbying v. Institutional lobbying**
 - On own time, using personal email address and computer
 - Don't mention you're speaking on behalf of your institution

Part III: About AHEAD's Advocacy

AHEAD supports policies and government initiatives, which support the following:

- Protecting the rights of students with disabilities and other minority groups
- Promoting diversity, equality, respect, and inclusivity in higher education for students with disabilities
- Ensuring full, effective participation by individuals with disabilities in every aspect of the postsecondary experience

Part III: About AHEAD's Advocacy: Ongoing Advocacy Efforts

AHEAD's ongoing advocacy efforts include:

- Updating Section 504
- Flexibility in financial aid programs for college students with disabilities
- Continued and expanded funding for the National Center for College Students with Disabilities
- RISE Act

Part III: About AHEAD's Advocacy

How to Get Involved

- Attend AHEAD Advocacy Webinars
- Flag policy issues you believe AHEAD should get involved in by emailing Policy@AHEAD.org
- Read The HUB's monthly Policy Corner for the latest AHEAD policy updates and opportunities to engage
- If interested in getting involved, contact Scott Lissner, AHEAD Public Policy Chair

Part III: Advocacy Feedback/Discussion

To what extent have you engaged with your local or federal elected officials?

- Very much
- Somewhat
- Not engaged

Part III: Advocacy Feedback/Discussion, cont.

Questions to consider for AHEAD's future advocacy:

- What would they like to see AHEAD doing in advocacy?
- How should AHEAD be sharing information?
- What should AHEAD be providing its members as it relates to advocacy?
- What should AHEAD be advocating for?

Part III: Advocacy Feedback/Discussion, cont.

Upcoming Events to Consider

- 2024 Equity and Excellence Conference
 - Where: Inner Harbor, Baltimore, Maryland
 - When: July 15th-July 20th

Any Questions?

Keep in touch with us (APS Contact Info)

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