



WVSUN

West Virginia Solar United Neighborhoods

Citizen Advocacy

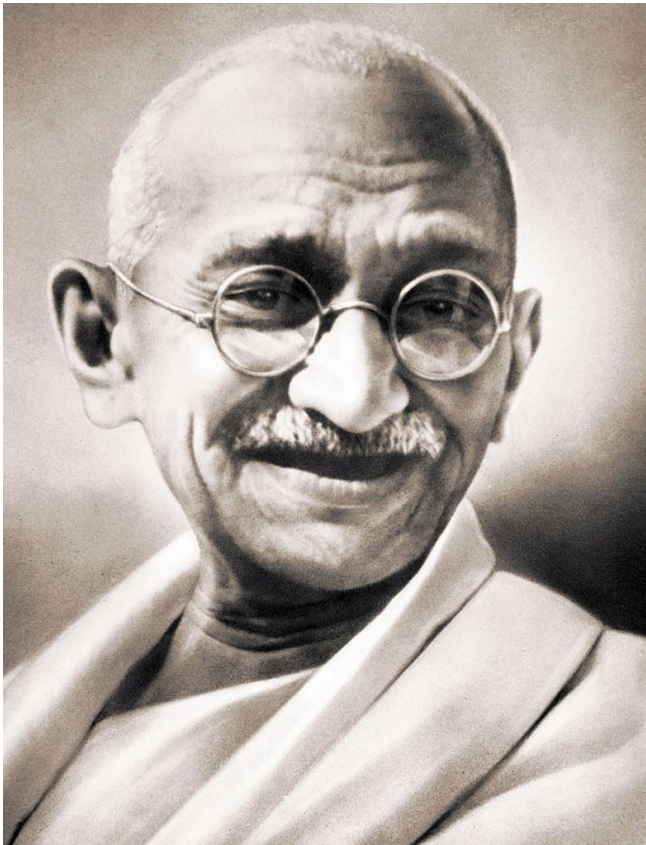
Why Be a Citizen Advocate?



- **West Virginia has a part-time legislature**
- **Most legislators are regular people who are only experts in their own lives and work**
- **Lawmakers depend on experts and constituents to learn more about issues**
- **You can only influence lawmakers on issues that are important to you if you speak up!**
- **Of the people, by the people, for the people...**

Why Be a Citizen Advocate?

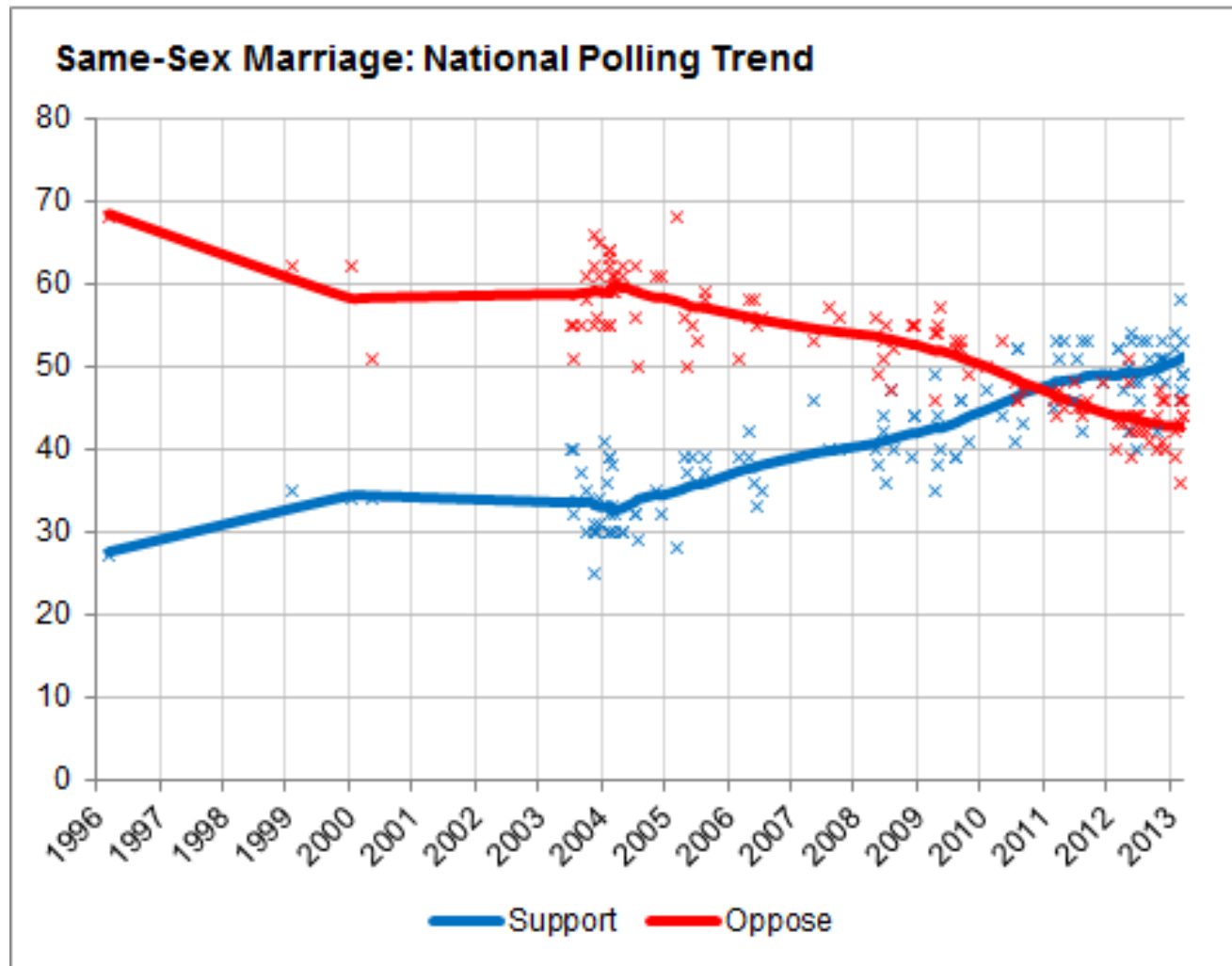
Every Issue Needs a Face and a Voice



Why Be a Citizen Advocate?

Change Happens When Advocates Don't Give Up

Unless someone like
you cares a whole
awful lot,
nothing is
going to get
better.
It's not.



Constituent Meetings

The Citizen Advocates Best Tool



Tools and Tips

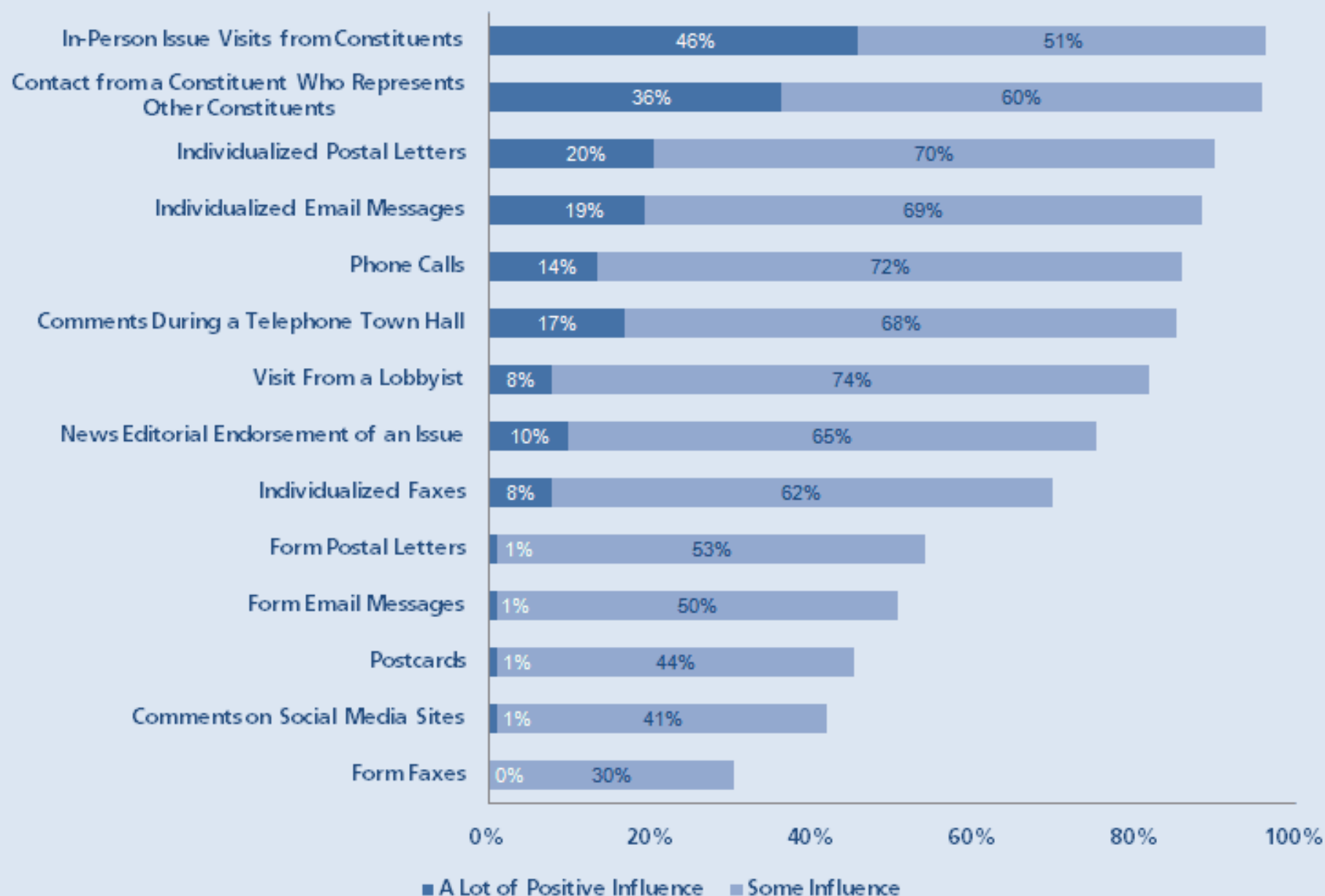
Websites:

- <http://www.psc.state.wv.us/>
- <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/>
- <http://www.wvsun.org>
- <http://www.seia.org/policy/state-solar-policy>
- http://openstates.org/find_your_legislator/



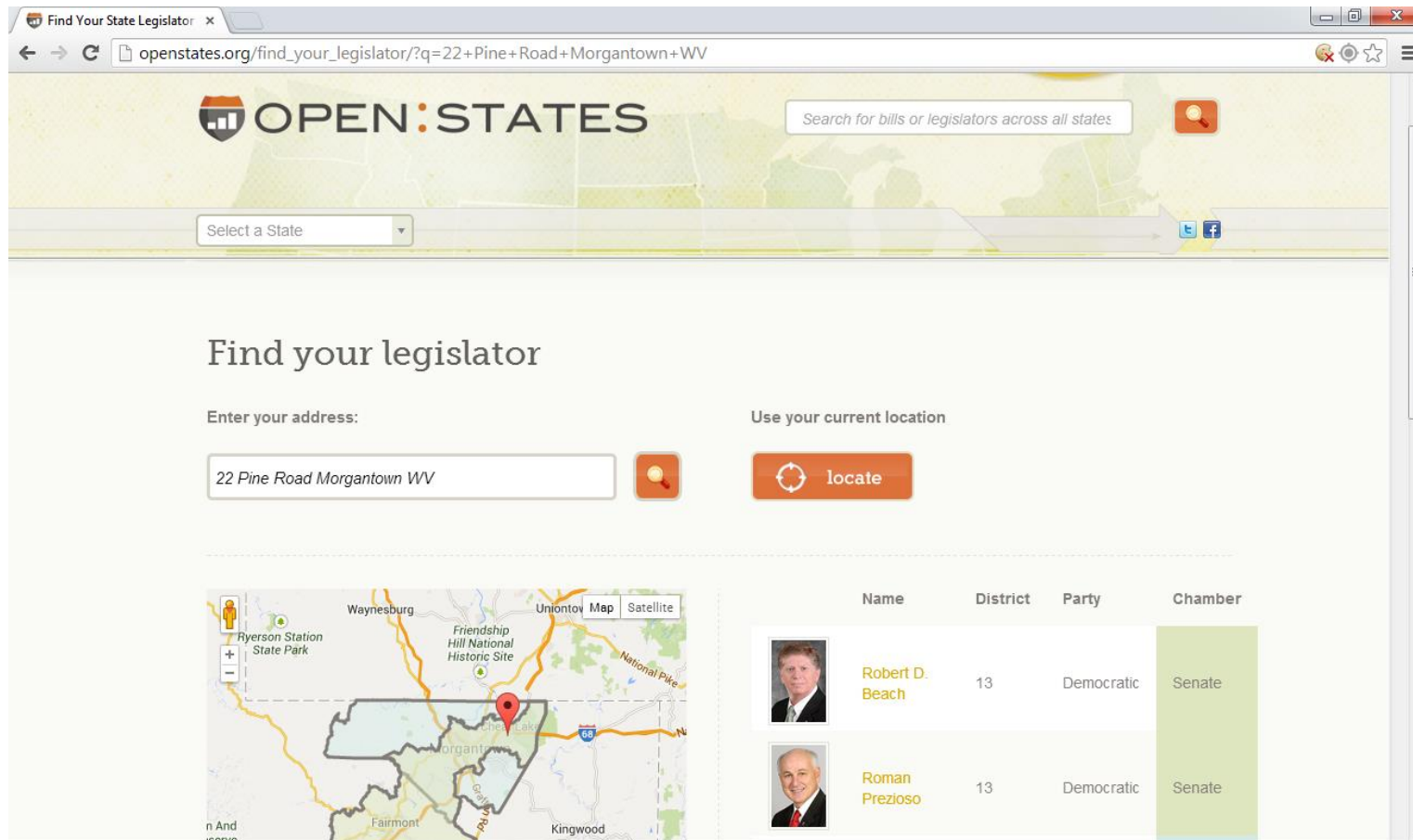
The screenshot shows the official website of the West Virginia Legislature. The header features the state seal and the text "West Virginia Legislature" with "2ND SESSION OF THE 82ND LEGISLATURE" below it. A search bar is on the right. A navigation menu includes links for Senate, House, Joint, Bill Status, WV Code, Audits/ Reports, Educational, and Contact. The main content area is divided into several sections: "Welcome to the West Virginia Legislature", "2016 REGULAR SESSION" (convened January 13, 2016, with links to the legislative calendar and finance budget hearings), "LIVE VIDEO STREAM" (with links to Senate and House chamber sessions), "DOWNLOADS" (with links to membership directory, Capitol maps, district maps, congressional map, and legislative manual), and "2016 INTERIM MEETINGS" (January 10-12, 2016, with a schedule link). A large image of the West Virginia State Capitol building is on the right. Below the main content are four boxes: "Streaming Audio" (West Virginia Legislature Live), "Blog - Today in the Legislature" (up-to-date summary of daily activities, last post January 14, 2016), "Bulletin Board" (prompt information during session), and "Final Wrap-up - June 2015" (official newsletter). The footer contains a list of links (Bill Status, Bill Tracking, WV Code, Bulletin Board, District Maps, Senate Roster, House Roster, Releases, Blog, Links, Home) and social media icons (RSS, Facebook, Twitter, Google+).

If your Member/Senator has not already arrived at a firm decision on an issue, how much influence might the following advocacy strategies directed to the *Washington* office have on his/her decision?*





Preparing for the Meeting

Step 1: Identify your legislators



The screenshot shows the OpenStates website interface. At the top, the URL is `openstates.org/find_your_legislator/?q=22+Pine+Road+Morgantown+WV`. The main heading is "Find your legislator". Below this, there are two input methods: "Enter your address:" with a text box containing "22 Pine Road Morgantown WV" and a search icon, and "Use your current location" with a "locate" button. A map on the left shows the location in West Virginia. On the right, a table lists the legislators for District 13.

Name	District	Party	Chamber
 Robert D. Beach	13	Democratic	Senate
 Roman Prezioso	13	Democratic	Senate

Preparing for the Meeting

Step 2: Do Your Research



Preparing for the Meeting

Step 3: Assemble Your Team

Outline your agenda & Assign roles

Assemble good leave-behind information

Practice, practice, practice!



Scheduling the Meeting

West Virginia Legislators are part-time

- Outside of legislative session, most of them have other jobs

Staffing

- Senators have staff and secretaries that can be helpful in scheduling meetings
- Delegates do not have staff with the exception of leadership and major committee chairs



Conducting the Meeting

Be punctual and persistent
Have a conversation (50-50 rule)
Keep the conversation on track
Be polite and respectful



Get a Commitment!



After the Meeting

➤ **Follow-up**

- Be sure to send a thank you note to with whomever you met (handwritten is more personal, e-mail is faster)
- Send supplemental information, if appropriate
 - If sending information, follow up a week or two later to see if they got it and to answer questions
- Offer to be a resource on your issue

Now for the Entertainment



Instructions for Role Play

- 1. Get into groups of 3-4 and pick one person to play the legislator**
- 2. Decide on one issue to lobby your legislator on**
- 3. As a group discuss:**
 - 1. What research would you need to do?**
 - 2. What leave-behind information would you need to prepare?**
 - 3. What stories or compelling anecdotes should you collect?**
- 4. Outline a draft agenda for a constituent meeting**
- 5. Practice having the meeting!**

Thank You