



CommunicationFIRST

Because communication is a human right.

Policy Advocacy 101 for AAC Users and Allies



Policy Advocacy 101 for AAC Users and Allies is written in bold, white lettering against a black background. Next to the title is a screenshot of Angelica Vega smiling with the CommunicationFIRST logo in black and white behind her. Below the title is a white circle with the words "Webinar with: Angelica Vega, Samuel Habib, Jordyn Zimmerman, Toby Latham, Dean Strauss, Bob Williams."

One of CommunicationFIRST's major projects this year has been producing media focused on Policy Advocacy 101 for AAC Users and Allies. On June 26, 2025, we held a [webinar](#) discussing a variety of ways to get involved in policy advocacy.

Policy advocacy is an important aspect of living in a democratic society. We get to stay informed of issues that government officials must make decisions about. We get to tell those government officials what we want. This is especially true for elected representatives, who are government officials that we vote for.

The Policy Advocacy 101 Webinar invited a panel of policy experts who are part of our community to discuss the ways they **advocate for change**. These panelists included [Bob Williams](#), [Jordyn Zimmerman](#), [Angelica Vega](#), [Samuel Habib](#), [Toby Latham](#), and [Dean Strauss](#). They shared their experiences and advice for engaging in policy advocacy, from face-to-face meetings to social media, and everything in between.

1629 K Street, NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20006

<https://CommunicationFIRST.org/>



The open-captioned, ASL-interpreted [recording](#) of our webinar is now available for viewing, along with a [transcript](#). Watch or rewatch the full webinar, lightly edited for clarity.

Participants

- **BOB WILLIAMS** is the co-founder of CommunicationFIRST. Bob has been an advocate for policy change since elementary school, when he staged a walkout of his segregated classroom to demand more inclusive education. Since then, Bob has advocated for policy change for people with significant disabilities in different roles in federal and state government and in the nonprofit sector over five decades. Before starting CommunicationFIRST in 2019, he was Director of the US Independent Living Administration at the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
- **JORDYN ZIMMERMAN** has advocated for change at her local school, across communities, on Capitol Hill, and at The White House. Her story about being denied and gaining access to communication as a young adult is featured in the documentary This Is Not About Me. Jordyn is also the Chair of the Board of Directors of CommunicationFIRST.
- **TOBY LATHAM** is an employment and disability rights attorney and a member of CommunicationFIRST's Board of Directors. He lives in Northern Virginia with his family, including his elementary school-aged son who uses augmentative and alternative communication. He is also an Army combat veteran.
- **ANGELICA VEGA** serves on CommunicationFIRST's Advisory Council. She lives in New Jersey and currently works at a large banking firm as a Data Management Associate. She earned a degree in Philosophy with a minor in Public Health from American University in Washington, D.C.
- **DEAN STRAUSS** is the Communications Manager at the Autistic Self Advocacy Network. His background is in media and design with a focus on civic media, queer and disability representation, and digital media. He has a degree in Civic Media from Columbia College Chicago.
- **SAMUEL HABIB** is the Emmy Award winning co-director of the New York Times Op-Doc My Disability Roadmap and the new feature documentary The Ride



Ahead, both co-directed with his father Dan Habib. Samuel also helped Dan create the nationally broadcast film Mr. Connolly Has ALS about Samuel's principal who gets ALS and loses the ability to speak. He is a college student and works at LikeRightNow Films and the Westchester Institute for Human Development

More About Policy Advocacy

- The Arc's [Storytelling Toolkit](#) teaches you how to plan your story when you want to use storytelling to advocate for change.
- ASAN's [Policy Toolkit](#) shares more information about policy advocacy. Their [Proxy Caller tool](#) connects volunteer callers with scripts that you can input if you can't or don't want to make calls to your representative yourself.

Where to Find Out Who Represents You and the Policies They Work on

- [Common Cause](#) provides information about legislation and policies at the national and state levels.
- [Ballotopedia](#) offers information about the people and policies currently up for voting, as well as the people in office.
- The [government provides this resource](#) for finding out who represents you at the federal, state, and local levels.
- [Vote 411](#) has resources for learning about what's on your ballot, as well as how to register to vote.

* * *