

## Title: "The Last Bill, a Senator's Story:" Advocacy and the Legislative Process

Presenters: Senator Linda M. Newell, SPHR, Social Justice and Ethics Master's Candidate, Iliff School of Theology, University of Denver; Susan K. Marine, Ph.D. Chair of Advocacy, Suicide Prevention Coalition of Colorado

After this session, an attendee will understand that she/he can have a voice in the legislative process, and

Will be able to describe at least three ways to influence this process using their commitment to the advocacy of the prevention of suicide policies and budgets

Abstract: "The Last Bill, a Senator's Story," is a 27-minute documentary produced by Senator Linda Newell that shows an insider's view of how state government really works. During her 8-year tenure as Senator she was a true champion for the Suicide Prevention Coalition of Colorado; she sponsored three suicide-related bills that were signed into law by the Governor. This film tells the real-life story of how (in her final term) she carried SB16-147, the so-called "Zero Suicide Bill" through the legislative process. The viewer will gain an understanding of the work done "behind the scenes," the challenges and frustration of working in bi-partisan fashion, and why the ability to compromise while keeping a sense of humor can be helpful in getting a bill passed. The film also shows how SPCC was able to work in partnership with the Senator to support the passage of this bill.

Following the film, Senator Linda Newell and Susan Marine, Chair of Advocacy for SPCC, will engage in dialogue and answer questions about their experiences working together to pass legislation.

- a.) No matter what role one plays (e.g. clinician or survivor), advocacy in the legislative process can and should be inclusive; each person has a story to tell that can influence the process.
- b.) It is not easy to fit this presentation into one of the four tracks. However, given the success we have had in helping to pass three bills together, I guess I would put this presentation under "programs that work."
- c.) The results: 3 bills passed and suicide prevention policy and dollars put into place
- d.) Both the Senator and I have the first-hand knowledge of the legislative process

and how to influence it from the legislator and the advocate perspectives.

- e.) The film itself is engaging and should result in questions and observations about the legislative process.
- f.) Specific ways of affecting the process will be discussed: responding to Action Alerts by calling or emailing legislators, testifying in committee, attending town halls, or meeting with legislators—how best to influence your legislators.