

A photograph of three women in a professional setting. A woman in the center, with short dark hair and wearing a white blouse, is smiling broadly and looking towards the left. To her left, another woman with blonde hair is also smiling and looking towards the center. To the right, a third woman with dark hair is partially visible, looking towards the center. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a meeting room with shelves and plants.

TRAINING MANUAL : Q3 2022

HOW TO TALK TO A REPORTER OR ELECTED OFFICIAL

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE



BUSINESSFORWARD
FOUNDATION

INTRODUCTION

Business Forward has helped more than 250,000 business leaders brief policymakers and work with local media, publish op-eds, testify at public hearings, lobby members of Congress and the White House, and advocate online.

They have appeared on *CNN*, *MSNBC*, *CNBC*, *FOX News*, and hundreds of local broadcast and radio stations. They've been featured in national outlets, like the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and hundreds of local papers.

We've also helped business leaders submit testimony to state legislatures, EPA, DHS, House Ways and Means, Senate Finance, and the White House.

We're here to help you make the most of your time fighting for the issues that you care about. This manual is intended to help you get started.

The New York Times



CHICAGO
SUN★TIMES

Bloomberg
Businessweek

MILWAUKEE • WISCONSIN
JOURNAL SENTINEL



THE PLAIN DEALER
CLEVELAND.COM

The
Washington
Post

MSNBC

PUGET SOUND
BUSINESS JOURNAL

THE SACRAMENTO BEE

THE
HILL



Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.
WSJ

The Detroit News

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POLITICAL CONTEXT

ON JUNE 24, THE SUPREME COURT ANNOUNCED A **6-3 DECISION IN DOBBS V. JACKSON**, WHICH EFFECTIVELY OVERRULED **ROE V. WADE** AND **PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF SOUTHEASTERN PA. V. CASEY**, BOTH OF WHICH HAD PREVIOUSLY AFFIRMED THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROTECTION FOR ABORTION.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE IN THE UNITED STATES

Access to comprehensive reproductive care and rightful bodily autonomy allows people to be in complete control of their decisions regarding personal, family, and career plans. The right to access abortion and contraceptives in the US was legalized in the early 1970s, but restrictions to reproductive rights at the state-level started gaining momentum when a wave of conservative politicians were elected to state legislatures in the 2010 midterm elections. Today, such restrictions are already severely limiting economic opportunities for millions of women in the US. The Dobbs decision is certain to worsen existing restrictions and introduce them in new states.

The Dobbs decision means that access to the full range of reproductive health services is immediately banned in 13 states — and 13 more states are expected to enact legislation limiting access. To make matters worse, the US does not have federal policies providing family-planning and health benefits for all Americans, which are especially critical if people are unable to decide if and when they want to have children. Without the right to choose, people will be more likely to struggle with poverty, lose their jobs, and face criminalization for seeking abortion care.

KEY FACTS

1

THE US RANKS **38TH** IN THE WORLD ON GENDER EQUALITY METRICS, INCLUDING HEALTH CARE, EDUCATION, AND WORKPLACE RIGHTS.

2

WOMEN EARN **84 CENTS** FOR EVERY DOLLAR MEN MAKE. CLOSING THE GENDER GAP = AN OPPORTUNITY TO GROW OUR ECONOMY BY **\$2.4 TRILLION** BY 2030.

3

86% OF WOMEN SAY THAT CONTROLLING IF AND WHEN THEY HAVE CHILDREN HAS BEEN IMPORTANT TO THEIR CAREERS. **99%** OF WOMEN HAVE USED CONTRACEPTION AND **24%** HAVE HAD AN ABORTION BY 45.

4

WITHOUT EXISTING STATE-LEVEL ABORTION RESTRICTIONS, **505,000 WOMEN** WOULD ENTER THE LABOR FORCE AND CURRENTLY EMPLOYED WOMEN WOULD MAKE **\$102 BILLION** MORE IN ANNUAL EARNINGS.

5

A MAJORITY OF COLLEGE-EDUCATED WOMEN (**56%**) SAY THEY WOULD NOT APPLY TO A JOB IN A STATE THAT HAS LIMITED ACCESS TO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES.

KEY CONCEPTS

At our briefings, small business leaders tend to make one or more of six critical points.

WOMEN DRIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

By helping women stay in and re-enter the workforce, our annual economic output could be \$2.4 trillion larger by 2030. But women cannot realize their potential in the workplace if the government makes it harder for them to plan if and when they want to have children.

PROGRESS HAS STALLED — WE CAN'T AFFORD TO GO BACKWARD

After decades of gains, women remain underrepresented in high-paying jobs and underprotected at work. Comprehensive reproductive care means more women (1) participate in the labor force; (2) access upskilling opportunities; and (3) move into better-paying jobs.

REPRODUCTIVE CARE BENEFITS EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES ALIKE

State bans don't stop abortions: people just travel farther distances to get them. This means longer absences from work, more employees forced to give birth, and more who leave their jobs. Government support matters most for small businesses because generous parental leave, health insurance, and recruitment are all easier for big businesses.

GLOBAL COMPETITORS ARE SUPPORTING WOMEN

While our competitors around the world are making it easier for women to succeed at work, the US is making it harder. Relative to other developed nations around the world, the US ranks poorly on women's labor force participation rate, gender equity at work, and maternal leave policies.

NO ONE WANTS TO INVEST IN DIVIDED COMMUNITIES

Restrictive abortion laws divide our communities. States compete with one another for new investment and jobs, and companies look for a talented workforce, sound infrastructure, and a strong community. State-level abortion restrictions will turn off investors looking for a vibrant, diverse, and inclusive economy to enter.

HIGH COST OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RESTRICTIONS

Each year, state-level abortion restrictions cost Americans \$105 billion by reducing labor force participation, earnings, and increasing turnover and time off. Without existing restrictions, more than 500,000 women would resume working and collectively earn \$3 billion per year, a 9% increase in total private sector earnings.

8 RULES TO FOLLOW

1: MAKE THE BUSINESS CASE

You have a business to run, so you want the time you volunteer to be meaningful and efficient. Focus on what you can best contribute: **the business case.**

1. THE QUESTIONS UNDECIDED AMERICANS ARE ASKING TEND TO RELATE TO JOBS, TAXES, ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, AND GOVERNMENT WASTE.

They want to know how a particular bill or issue will affect their industry, their town and state, and their employer. And they trust business leaders more than politicians.

“

I own a small child care business in Wyoming. Our whole industry was slowed down by the COVID-19 pandemic. I lost several employees and am still struggling to fill their roles.

If the impending ban on abortions take place in our state, recruiting, retaining, and supporting my employees will become even more difficult. The child care industry in Wyoming can't afford another variable that makes it harder to find qualified talent.

”

2. A DATA-DRIVEN, RESULTS-ORIENTED APPROACH, FOCUSED ON REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE, HELPS DEPOLITICIZE CONTENTIOUS ISSUES.

Undecided voters appreciate an evidence-based approach, and business leaders can connect their experiences with proposed public policy decisions.

“

I work at a retail store in Ohio. Our industry has had a tough run since the pandemic. The last thing we need is to make it more difficult than ever for women to make plans that work for both their families and careers.

Stricter abortion bans and limited reproductive health care could cost the state \$4.5 billion per year, whereas comprehensive care would add nearly 20,000 women to our labor force, strengthening the talent pool and boosting Ohio's economy.

”

2: UNDERSTAND YOUR MISSION

Business leaders generally contribute to the debate in one of three ways. **Before you speak out, be sure to understand which role you're playing.**

1. RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT A PROBLEM.

For example, a business leader can highlight the economic costs of inaction in Congress following the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe.

“

The small businesses in my community cannot afford the costs of supporting pregnant women without government assistance. For every 100 miles a person has to travel, they are 25% less likely to have the abortion they need. That means more employees on leave and more quitting their jobs altogether.

”

2. PUSHING SPECIFIC PROVISIONS OR CONCEPTS DURING A LEGISLATIVE PROCESS OR BUDGET NEGOTIATION.

For example, to push for federal legislation securing legal access to abortions, a business leader can demonstrate what restricted reproductive health care means for their bottom line.

“

Businesses that cannot afford to offer adequate reproductive care to employees will have trouble recruiting and retaining workers. Small businesses do not always have the resources to be as supportive as is necessary for pregnancy and family-care obligations.

The Federal Government should codify Roe so states can help small employers access the resources we need.

”

3. HELPING CLOSE A DEAL, SUPPORTING A TOUGH VOTE.

Today, it's too easy for special interests to derail needed legislation. Even allies can block a “good” deal because it's not “perfect.” A business leader can explain that an incomplete bill is still far better than nothing at all.

“

You may be right that this bill isn't as strong as it should be: banning abortion at 15 weeks does not go far enough to protect the health of those giving birth, but the deal is still better than an outright ban and represents a step in the right direction for our legislature.

If this deal fails, we could miss our only chance to avoid a complete abortion ban for years to come.

”

3: HAVE A CLEAR OPINION

“On the one hand... but, on the other hand...” won’t help a member of Congress decide how to vote, and newspapers are unlikely to publish an op-ed that fails to pick a side. **If you’re going to speak out, be clear.** Raise an alarm. Provide cover on a tough vote. Avoid equivocation.

JON HURDLE

CLIMATE CHECK: US INVESTORS ‘LACK DATA ON CLIMATE RISK’

mni

...Smith Insurance Agency in Helena, Ark. has been writing fewer home-owner policies in recent years because premiums and deductibles have soared, while policyholders have avoided making claims for fear of not getting their policies renewed by risk-averse underwriters, said owner Kevin Smith.

An owner of a typical 3,000-square-foot house in Smith’s market is now paying \$4,000 a year to insure the property, more than twice the rate of five years ago, while the deductible for such a property has surged to \$2,000 from \$500 over the same period.

Over the last two years, premiums have risen about 20%, he said, and that’s straining homeowners’ ability to maintain coverage or forcing the mot choose between insurance and other purchases.

“People are getting to the point where they can’t afford homeowners’ insurance any more,” he said. “There’s a huge cost to our customers and to our economy because it means they will have less to spend on other things.”...

To slow greenhouse gas emissions, he urged governments to impose a carbon tax, which would fall most heavily on the biggest producers - the power-generation industry - forcing it to pay a tax that is already effectively levied on all those who feel the effects of climate change.

← MAKES THE COST RELATEABLE BY STARTING WITH IMPACT ON A SINGLE CUSTOMER.

← PIVOTS FROM SINGLE EXAMPLE TO INDUSTRY.

← EXPANDS FROM INDUSTRY TO ECONOMY AS A WHOLE.

← DESCRIBES PROBLEM AS MARKET FAILURE AND PROPOSES MARKET-DRIVEN SOLUTION.

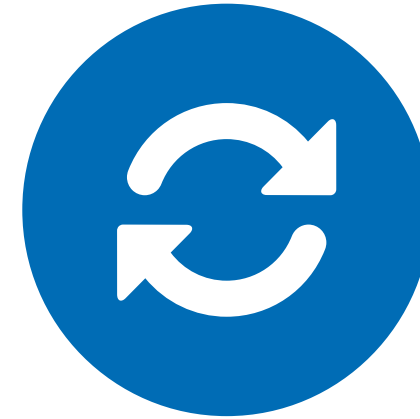
4: KEEP IT SHORT, KEEP IT SIMPLE (AND PRACTICE)

Talking live to a radio reporter? You'll get two questions and about 20 seconds. Taping a TV interview in your office? The station will use about 30 seconds of your 15-minute interview. Meeting with your senator? You'll get about five minutes.



REPORTERS CAN'T QUOTE YOU IF YOUR ANSWERS ARE TOO LONG.

Elected officials, who meet with dozens of constituents every day, won't remember your key points if they're buried.



TO BE SUCCESSFUL, MAKE YOUR POINT QUICKLY, AND MAKE IT REPEATEDLY.

Extend your idea with examples. Ideally, start each interview with three points in mind; practice each point before you speak with the reporter or official; and practice referring back to your points in different ways.



USING LOCAL EXAMPLES AND SIMPLE COMPARISONS CAN HELP YOU MAKE YOUR POINT MORE QUICKLY.

For example, when advocating for federal background checks on all gun sales, a business leader can compare how the strength of gun laws across states affects communities. In general, states with stronger gun laws have fewer gun deaths as well as lower costs to taxpayers. Massachusetts has the 7th strongest gun laws, lowest gun death rank, and an average annual cost of \$261 per taxpayer due to gun violence. Missouri, on the other hand, has the 5th weakest gun laws, 7th highest gun death rank, and an average annual cost of \$1,606 to taxpayers.

5: SPEAK FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES, CUSTOMERS, SUPPLIERS AND COMPETITORS

You're most effective when you cite your employees, customers, suppliers, or competitors as evidence. For example, an accountant with 50 clients has credibility on simplifying the tax code, while an accountant with 50 employees has credibility explaining the kinds of health care options they value.

Most business leaders share the name of their company when they talk with reporters, publish an op-ed, or speak out in some other way. These executives are building their company's brand:

“ At ABC Property, we've been in Indiana's real estate business for 30 years. If our state legislature allows such strict laws against women to persist, many businesses will leave or refuse to move here. ”

Alternatively, you can also speak generally, without naming your company, as an expert in the industry:

“ I've been working in Indiana's real estate business for 30 years. If our state legislature allows such strict laws against women to persist, many businesses will leave or refuse to move here. ”

Business abroad is going to happen anyway, the question is whether or not international business practices will be fair. **If the United States doesn't set the rules, someone else will.**

- Brenda Hall, 360 Bridge

AUSTIN
BUSINESS JOURNAL

Every product we sell overseas **helps us hire more Washington-state workers** and pay them competitive wages.

- Anil Amlani, Sonosite

PUGET SOUND
BUSINESS JOURNAL

If passage of this authority stalls, our trading partners might be inclined to negotiate their own agreements, with **the United States left on the sidelines.**

- Det Ansinn, BrickSimple

The Philadelphia Inquirer

The future of small businesses like mine goes hand in hand with the future of the US trade agenda.

- Wendy Mascio, Medical Equipment

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

I've seen how **exporting can powerfully transform a company**, and I want to see it do the same for others.

- Kyle Weatherly, Solaris

MILWAUKEE • WISCONSIN
JOURNAL SENTINEL

Discouraging businesses from expanding to other countries is like standing in a shopkeeper's doorway and turning away **95 percent of customers.**

- Craig Shields, Graymills

CHICAGO
SUN★TIMES

SMALL BUSINESS LEADERS ARGUE FOR NEW TRADE AGREEMENTS

6: REFRAME QUESTIONS ABOUT “HOT BUTTON” ISSUES

The whole point of having business leaders speak out is to get beyond the partisan or hot button issues that dominate most press coverage. Your job is to focus on what a particular proposal or problem means for business, jobs, and economic growth. That’s your area of expertise. If a reporter does ask you an off-topic question, **pivot back to your key points**.

EXAMPLE - POLITICAL FEASIBILITY

A business leader can support legislation by explaining what it would mean for the communities they live and work in. But a reporter may respond to your point by asking about the political feasibility of a specific reform or the opinions of particular Senators.

“

I can’t speak on the ins and outs of this political process, or where certain elected officials are on the issue, but I do know that our small business community in Madison backs legislation to create a strong reproductive health care system.

”

EXAMPLE - PAYFORS

A business leader can support investments in reproductive care by explaining how such investments unlock billions of dollars in economic opportunities for women in their state.

“

Establishing support for Texans of childbearing age and all women in our state should not be viewed as a burden to taxpayers.

Analysis has shown that by helping women re-enter and stay in the workforce, eliminating restrictions to abortion would create an additional \$15 billion in annual economic gains for Texas families and businesses.

”

EXAMPLE - SPECIFIC INCENTIVES

A business leader can support government-funded parental leave policies by explaining how a strong paid-leave environment creates positive incentives and strengthens the overall labor market in their community.

“

State-level abortion restrictions mean people either travel farther distances to get abortions or are forced to give birth: both mean employers see longer absences from work.

Public funding for paid-leave levels the playing field for all employers and means job-seekers can expect strong support across job opportunities.

”

7: ACT LIKE YOU'RE ON-THE-RECORD, EVEN WHEN YOU'RE NOT

The rules for “on” and “off” the record can vary from reporter to reporter. As a general rule, **we recommend you operate on-the-record – and pick your words accordingly.**



ON-THE-RECORD:

The reporter can quote you directly (by name).



OFF-THE-RECORD:

Off-the-record can mean different things. It usually means the reporter can only use information if a second source verifies or shares it. Sometimes, it relates to how you are cited. For example, a reporter may refer to you indirectly (for example, as “a partner at a Cleveland VC firm”), or she may use your information without citing you at all. Some reporters consider this method of citing individuals “on background.” On background can also mean you are willing to share research or other information with a reporter but do not want to be featured in the story.



Because reporters apply these rules differently, you need to set the terms of the conversation before the interview begins. If you do not specify “off,” you are “on.” If you specify “off,” and the reporter says nothing, you are still “on.” If you do not want to be quoted, establish the terms under which the reporter may use the information and how it will be attributed.

REMEMBER: YOU CAN'T TAKE SOMETHING OFF THE RECORD AFTER THE FACT.

8: PICK YOUR BATTLES – AND LET BUSINESS FORWARD HELP

A single business leader, acting alone, is unlikely to have an impact. But hundreds or thousands of business leaders, making similar arguments at the same time, are hard to ignore.

It also helps to deliver your op-ed, interview, or post when your particular issue is in play. For example, we had a handful of opportunities to fix our immigration laws over the last few years. Each opportunity was driven by the budget process, or some other legislative priority. Each time, immigration advocates and Business Forward worked together to deliver business support for a reasonable compromise that would protect immigrants and respect the rule of law.

We encourage you to share your work with us, and we promise to limit our “digital actions,” surveys, and “a reporter just called” requests to moments when you can really make a difference. We won’t waste your time.

With your permission, we can also include your comments in testimony we present to Congressional committees and federal agencies.



FOR WOMEN’S HEALTH WEEK, BUSINESS LEADERS FIGHT BACK

This week is Women’s Health Week, and **more than 1,700 entrepreneurs, executives, and small business owners** have signed on to a letter form Business Forward, affirming their belief that access to health care is essential to women’s professional and personal success.

MAY 17, 2019

► BUSINESS FORWARD

TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF 1,000+ SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS CONCERNED ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

APRIL 25, 2017

► BUSINESS FORWARD

BUSINESS LEADERS TO POLITICIANS: “RESPECT THE RULE OF LAW”

New report shows business leaders’ concerns over attacks on the judiciary... **475 business leaders submitted personal statements** about America’s courts.

MARCH 7, 2019



IN THEIR OWN WORDS: 10 BUSINESS LEADERS EXPLAIN WHY THEY ARE CALLING FOR MAJOR CHANGES AT AMERICA’S SCHOOLS.

JULY 24, 2018

BEST PRACTICES

**FOR OP-EDS, LETTERS TO THE EDITOR,
AND BRIEFING ELECTED OFFICIALS**

OP-EDS AND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

OP-EDS

Op-eds make an argument about a pressing issue, usually featuring an unusual and compelling voice from the community. Most newspapers limit op-eds to 600 words.

VALUE

In deciding whether to publish your piece, editors will ask four questions. Is your issue important? Is it timely? Does it have a significant local angle? And does the author have a credible and interesting angle?

STRUCTURE

Use eight to 10 short paragraphs, about two to three sentences each. Start with an anecdote that introduces your point of view. Explain why the issue is important right now. Introduce your business, and explain how this issue affects your business. Close with a call to action.

PITCHING

Larger papers have online tools that allow you to submit your op-ed. Others invite you to email your document. Start with the largest newspaper in your market, or a leading outlet in your particular industry. Be sure to check whether it's published a similar piece recently. If so, move on to your second choice. When you submit an op-ed to one paper, you can't shop it to another until the first gives you an answer.

RESOURCES & LINKS

<https://resource-media.org/writing-slam-dunk-op-ed/>

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (LTES)

LTEs typically respond directly to an article or op-ed the newspaper has recently published. You can also respond to a recent news event. Keep your draft to 200 words or less. We recommend you use four short paragraphs, 1-2 sentences each. Don't be surprised if the newspaper edits for space. Larger papers have online tools that allow you to submit your LTE. Others invite you to email your document.

RESOURCES & LINKS

<https://resource-media.org/letters-to-the-editor/>

TALKING TO YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

GENERAL

A small number of calls from informed constituents can have a bigger impact than you might think. Regular communication, over time, builds trust. Be sure to focus on your elected officials – the ones who represent where you live, where you work, or your employees. In Congress, Representatives of other districts are likely to ignore you out of deference to your Representative and because they cannot use their office funds to pay for communications outside their districts.

LETTERS

Use email. Regular mail to Congress is re-routed, sorted, and x-rayed. This can add weeks to delivery. Most offices have email forms accessible from the “contact” tab on the lawmaker’s official website. Include the legislation or issue in your subject line – with a “yes” or “no” to make your opinion clear (e.g., “NO on steel tariffs” or “YES on carbon pricing”). Keep your message to three paragraphs. Use a fact-based approach. Cite local examples, if you have them. Identify yourself as a constituent and business leader in your first paragraph.

CALLS

Identify yourself as a constituent or as a business leader with a presence in the district. Identify the topic/bill you want to discuss. Be clear about your position. Ask for the Legislative Assistant covering your issue. If they refer you to a Constituent Liaison, that’s okay. If you have data about the bill or your business, describe it (e.g., “These new tariffs raised the price of steel by 25%. This new cost wiped out 40% of my profit this month.”). Ask for the name and email of the staffer responsible for that issue, then send him or her a follow-up email with the data.

REQUEST A MEETING, OFFER A TOUR

This is one of the best ways to break through with a business government office. Ask for the Legislative Assistant covering your issue. Request a meeting with the official. If dealing with a Member of Congress, request a meeting back home, during in-district work periods. If appropriate, invite your elected official to visit your place of business.

RESOURCES & LINKS

FIND YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

<https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>

RESEARCH THEIR BIOS, COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

<https://www.congress.gov/members>

RESEARCH THEIR VOTING RECORD

https://www.senate.gov/legislative/HowTo/how_to_votes.htm

SEARCH FOR SPONSORED BILLS

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/browse>

ABOUT BUSINESS FORWARD FOUNDATION

The Business Forward Foundation is an independent research organization that takes a business-minded look at policy issues affecting America's economic competitiveness. The Foundation combines insights and advice from more than 250,000 local business leaders across the country with rigorous policy analysis to educate the general public on some of the most important issues of our time.



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