



FOR STUDENTS

ADVOCACY SIMULATION GUIDE

MAZON | A Jewish Response
To Hunger

ADVOCACY SIMULATION GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

In this activity, you will participate in a role play exercise where you will simulate the advocacy process. Each student will participate in strategizing, lobbying, coalition building, offering testimony, and voting.

BACKGROUND

The Governor of Calissouri has introduced the “Healthy Eating Here at Home Bill,” which would match any money SNAP (food stamp) recipients spend at farmer’s markets dollar for dollar, allowing them to spend double what they would normally (up to a \$10 limit each week).

HOW TO READ YOUR ROLES

During this exercise, you will each play a character. Each of these characters has a stake in this bill passing or failing and it will be your job to represent your character’s position, not your own. Try to stay true to the character as possible!

Your character bio will tell you about the character that you are playing. It will tell you how you feel about the Bill, and whether or not your opinions can be swayed.

Some of you will have definite positions on the bill. Your goal in the exercise is to do whatever you can get your vision for the bill passed. The “goals” section on your character sheet will give you some ideas as to how you can go about this. Some of you will not have a definite position on the bill. Your job is to try to pick a side, not based on your own personal feelings but based on your character’s concerns and how others address those concerns.

Depending on the number of people participating, all of the characters may not be in play, so if your sheet mentions somebody you don’t see, just ignore it. If there are more people participating than roles, you may also share your character with one or more other people. In this case, you will meet with other characters as a unit, and will work together to come up with a position and strategy for your character.

DON'T READ UNTIL SESSION TWO!

During the actual advocacy simulation you will have time to strategize, talk to other characters, make decisions about your position on the bill and amendments, and try to persuade people of those positions.

→ STRATEGY SESSION/COALITION BUILDING:

Use this time to re-familiarize yourself with your character and the information in your character's packet, think about who else you want to talk to, and come up with a plan for what you will say if/when you make a Lobby Visit appointment to meet with Senators.

You may form coalitions with others who have similar views and you may decide to lobby together, offer joint testimony at the public hearing, support/oppose the same amendments, or organize a joint protest.

The meetings with other characters can either be to share information / talk strategy with people on your side, try to glean information from the opposition, or see if you can convince people in the middle to take your positions. Prioritize meeting with characters that you think will be the most useful, but try to talk to everybody! You never know who you can learn from or who's mind you can change.

→ LOBBY VISITS (happen at the same time as Strategy Session/Coalition Building):

The three senators stay at the state house (a certain pre-determined location in the room marked by the Calissouri State House sign) and don't leave, while everybody else can walk around.

At the beginning of the simulation you can choose to sign up for your lobby visit with any or all (or none) of the senators. You may meet as individuals or coalitions. The senators will take meetings one by one, calling people over when it is their turn. Senators can

choose to see people in whatever order they want, and may also choose never to speak with certain characters. While groups aren't meeting with senators, they can prepare pitches for those meetings, meet with other characters, or write their testimonies.

The meetings with senators are a chance to argue your position (using the arguments your character would make), and also argue for and against amendments. You should also let them know how upset you will be if they vote the wrong way (especially if votes campaign donations are on the line) and why it is in their best interest to support your position.

→ PUBLIC HEARING:

After the strategy session, coalition building and lobbying are over, there will be a Public Hearing where everyone gets one minute to testify and share their positions on the bill and what (if any) amendments they can/cannot support. If you'd like, you can also choose to create and share a poster or slogan instead of spoken testimony.

→ THE VOTE:

Following the Public Hearing, the three Senators go to a separate room or corner to discuss what they have heard and consider how they will vote. They may vote yes or no on the bill, and may also choose to include none or all of the amendments. Once each individual senator has determined their position on the bill and the amendments, the three senators return to the main group.

Each senator will "vote" on the bill and the amendments by sharing publicly with the group how they voted and offering a few words on why they made their decision. If there are two or more who agree, the bill passes or fails. If there is no consensus, the bill fails.

While the Senators vote, the Reporter will have the chance to "publish" the story they have been working on and share it with the rest of the characters.

REFLECTION/CONCLUSION

After the "vote," you will have an opportunity to let go of your character and express your own personal opinions. You will also be asked to reflect on the activity, how it relates to advocacy in the real world and ways that you can create change and help end hunger.