



NAJIT

Advocacy 101

for Interpreters and Translators

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Coming together

*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or **the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.***

First Amendment, US Constitution

The decision to join a membership organization is more accurately defined as a decision to affiliate with other people with whom one has a shared identity. (Dignam, 2007) **One of the pillars of our democracy is our freedom of association.** This is the right of individuals to join or leave groups of one’s own choosing and for the group to take **collective action** to pursue the interests of its members. In [NAACP v. Alabama](#) the **Supreme Court of the United States decided** that freedom of association is an essential part of freedom of speech because, in many cases, **people can engage in effective speech only when they join with others.** (NAACP v Alabama)

Why advocate?

Advocacy is the act or process of supporting a cause or policy. The terms for “attorney” in Spanish (*abogado*) and French (*avocat*) come from Latin. The word “advocate” originates from the Latin verb *advocare* (to plead in favor of), which in turn comes from the Latin verb *vocare* (to call or to summon) and the preposition *ad* (about). To advocate is to publicly recommend or support a particular cause or policy, and an advocate is the person who does it.

Should interpreters and translators advocate?

On the job	Professional association
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpreters must remain impartial and neutral when they are rendering their interpreting services • Translators must not let their own biases interfere with the transfer of meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpreters and translators are subject matter experts of their profession • Interpreters and translators promote the profession and its practitioners
Social Persona: service provider	Social Persona: association member
ADVOCACY FORBIDDEN	ADVOCACY PERMITTED



What is lobbying?

Advocacy	Lobbying
A broad term covering a range of activities that seek to bring about systemic social change. It includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Executive branch activities• Issue organizing• Lobbying	An attempt to influence specific legislation through direct or grassroots communications by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stating a position on specific legislation to legislators• Urging members or the general public to contact their legislators with a position on specific legislation

Who is a lobbyist?

Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act (LDA) of 1995, a lobbyist must meet three conditions:

1. Is a paid employee of an organization;
2. Makes at least two lobbying contacts with legislative or executive branch officials; and
3. Spends at least 20% of his or her time on “lobbying” activities.

Independent contractors and volunteers are not included in the LDA definition of “lobbyist.”

Therefore, a nonprofit organization that only retains an outside lobbyist or lobbying firm (i.e., it does not have an in-house employee who is a lobbyist) does not need to register and report under the LDA. (Lobbying Guidelines for Public Charities)

What is a business league?

Tax-exempt nonprofit organizations play a vital role in our democracy. One in four Americans volunteers through an organization. There are an estimated 1.4 million non-profit organizations in the United States, of which charities and foundations make up two thirds of the total. (Dignam, 2008). Voluntary associations are the fabric of civil society and there is nothing more American than a business league. The Declaration of Independence was drafted at the Carpenters’ Hall in Philadelphia. (Carpenters Hall)

A [business league](#) is an association of persons having some common business interest, the purpose of which is to **promote such common interest** and not to engage in a regular business of a kind ordinarily carried on for profit. Business leagues trace their origins to medieval guilds. Trade associations and **professional associations are business leagues.**

To be exempt, a business league's activities must be devoted to **improving business conditions** of one or more lines of business as distinguished from performing particular services for individual persons. No



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part of a business league's net earnings may inure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual and it may not be organized for profit to engage in an activity ordinarily carried on for profit (even if the business is operated on a cooperative basis or produces only enough income to be self-sustaining).

Can NAJIT engage in advocacy?

Nonprofit organizations can be member-driven or board-driven with self-perpetuating boards. NAJIT is an IRC 501(c)(6) tax-exempt nonprofit member driven professional association. NAJIT members have a **shared identity**, that of being interpreting and translation service providers and have **affiliated to advance the T&I profession** based on a common vision and shared values.

Functions of professional associations ranked by importance:

1. Providing professional development
2. Providing technical information
3. Providing timely information about the profession
4. Creating networking opportunities
5. Establishing standards of practice (advocacy)
6. Representing the profession to the government (advocacy)
7. Representing the profession to the public (advocacy)
8. Representing the profession within the industry or discipline (advocacy)
9. Providing competency based certification

(Dignam, 2007)

[Section 501\(c\)\(6\)](#) of the Internal Revenue Code provides for the exemption of business leagues, chambers of commerce, real estate boards, boards of trade and professional football leagues, which are not organized for profit and no part of the net earnings of which to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.

Organizations described in [IRC 501\(c\)\(6\)](#) may engage in an **unlimited amount of lobbying, provided that the lobbying is related to the organization's exempt purpose.**

(IRS Business Leagues)

(Political Campaign and Lobbying Activities of IRC 501 (c) Organizations)

[Permissible lobbying activities for business leagues](#)



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Seeking legislation germane to the common business interest is a permissible means of attaining a business league's exempt purposes. Thus, an Internal Revenue Code (IRC) [section 501\(c\)\(6\) business league](#) may further its exempt purposes by lobbying as its sole activity without jeopardizing its exempt status. However, a section 501(c)(6) organization that engages in lobbying may be required either to notify its members about the percentage of dues that are used for lobbying activities or to pay a proxy tax. (IRS: Lobbying Activities - Business Leagues)

As a business league, NAJIT is duty bound to:

- Promote the common interest of its members
- Improve the business conditions of the profession

NAJIT may:

- Engage in unlimited lobbying as long as it is related to the organization's non-profit purpose
- Seek legislation germane to the common business interest
- Establish standards of practice
- Represent the profession to the government
- Represent the profession to the public
- Represent the profession within the industry or discipline

A word of caution

Free and open markets are the foundation of the United States' economy. The [Federal Trade Commission](#) enforces antitrust laws and regulations to promote competition among sellers (e.g. interpreters and translators) in the belief that an open marketplace gives consumers the benefit of lower prices, more choices, higher quality, and greater innovation. Below is a list of activities that run afoul of antitrust laws and regulations:

- **Price fixing:** an agreement (written, verbal, or inferred from conduct) among competitors that raises, lowers, or stabilizes prices or competitive terms.
- **Bid rigging:** coordination among bidders when soliciting for competitive bids (e.g. Request For Proposal).
- **Market division or customer allocation:** agreements among competitors to divide sales territories or assign customers.
- **Group boycotts:** an agreement among competitors not to do business with targeted individuals or businesses.
- **Agreements to restrict advertising:** false, deceptive or overly restrictive advertising.
- **Codes of ethics:** unreasonable ethical restrictions regarding the ways professionals may compete.
- **Exclusive member benefits:** withholding of association benefits from would-be members that offer a competitive alternative that consumers want.



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- **Trade associations:** exchanging price or other sensitive business data among competitors, or using a trade association to control or suggest prices. Information-sharing programs, or standardized contracts, operating hours, accounting, safety codes, or transportation methods can be found to be disguised means of fixing prices.

(Guide to AntiTrust Laws, Dealings with Competitors)

Be careful that advocating for industry standards and the hiring of credentialed professionals does not evolve into demanding to be paid a specific rate. Under current United States laws, only employees have the right to negotiate rates of pay as a group. This is called collective bargaining and it is the purview of labor unions which are [IRC 501\(c\)\(5\)](#) tax-exempt non-profit organizations. Independent contractors do not have the right to unionize unless they obtain an exemption from current labor laws or can prove that they are misclassified employees.

NAJIT' S 2017 advocacy priorities

These advocacy priorities were approved by the NAJIT Board and are supported by the NAJIT Advocacy Survey results (see Appendix A).

Priority #1: Always use credentialed interpreters and translators.

Distribute the [Job Descriptions](#) document. It responds to descriptions of translators and interpreters such as the one that follows. Many professional associations have endorsed those definitions and we are looking for more endorsements.

(NAJIT Job Descriptions)

The U.S. Department of Labor describes us as follows:

30110 – Foreign Language Translator

The Foreign Language Translator translates to English from a variety of language sources, included but not limited to print and audio. Complete knowledge of language must provide translator with a wide range of standard and non-standard terminology and an understanding of dialects and jargon. This worker must be able to comprehend slang and colloquial expressions in translating both technical and non-technical materials; must idiomatically translate repetitive material in specialized areas, including documents, reports, and general correspondence, in full or summary form and provide supplemental research when necessary. Some interpreting will be required.

This worker must ensure that the final translation communicates the accurate meaning of the original transcribed document and conform as closely as possible to the format of the



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source document. Translation must use accepted standard English grammar in attaining clarity and a faithful rendition of the original source's meaning. Translation requires treatment of conventional problems and situations using established translation practices and principles. This translator must possess the ability to make independent determinations concerning accuracy and thoroughness of the translation, and will often report to supervisory translator yet must be able to function independently.

(Service Contract Act (SCA) Directory of Occupations, Fifth Edition, pg 110)

The Government's description combines translation and interpreting and does not refer to any objective qualifications such as competency-based professional certifications, which have become a common expectation in the field.

Priority #2: Promote use of consensus-based professional standards such as ASTM and ISO

The ASTM F2089-15 [Standard Practice for Language Interpreting costs only](#) \$43. Buy it and become familiar with it!

You can read about it in these two articles: 1) [PROTEUS 2016 Spring Volume XXVIV](#), No. 1 It's here! The ASTM Interpreting Standard Is Finally Here!; and 2) ATA Interpreters Division [ASTM Standard F2089-15 at Your Service!](#)

Priority #3: Allow professional associations to negotiate group health insurance so their members, who may be independent contractors, can be covered by plans similar to those currently covering employees.

Is [employer group health insurance](#) available to sole proprietors? In the past, some states that allowed sole proprietors to purchase group coverage were often referred to as states that guarantee coverage for "business groups of one." The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has eliminated this option of "business groups of one." Instead, these business owners have been directed to purchase coverage in the individual market whether through the marketplace or outside the marketplace. Another barrier for NAJIT is the current prohibition against purchasing health insurance across state lines.

(National Association of Insurance Underwriters)

NAJIT's advocacy long term goal

Goal: to become the go-to resource on interpreting and translation issues for our legislators.

- Developing a personal relationship with your legislator is key. Advocacy is not about a one-time appointment but about developing a relationship of mutual trust, so you are the person who contributes valuable resources.
- Send regular email updates. Go to Town Hall Meetings. Pick up the phone. Stay in touch!



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Be prepared to answer a question legislators ask frequently: How many people are affected? You can use information from the [Migration Policy Institute](#) , which tracks limited English Proficient data.

Legislators also frequently ask: What is the economic impact? Following are some cases in which interpreting errors made a significant economic difference.

- [Willie Ramírez](#): one word (intoxicado, which means drunk or poisoned) was mistranslated as intoxicated (on drugs). This caused significant harm to the patient.
- A [Spanish interpreter in Portland, Oregon](#), mistranslated a street name: \$3 million lawsuit, for wrongful death.
- [A 2010 report](#) by the UC Berkeley School of Public Health and National Health Law Program examined 1,373 malpractice claims and found 35 cases in which death, dismemberment, brain damage, and other cases of severe medical harm were traced to inadequate medical interpreting.

The cases, compiled over four years, involved multiple languages, and patients of all ages. In one case, involving a 9-year-old girl, the report found that emergency room doctors neither “provided competent oral interpreters, nor translation of important written” consent forms in prescribing the drug Reglan for what was diagnosed as stomach flu.

- [A man lost his sight](#) because since he did not speak English he was unable to understand the doctor regarding treatment of his partially detached retina. He had come to the United States specifically to seek specialized treatment.

We hire licensed plumbers and electricians for construction jobs. We hire board-certified doctors for surgeries. However, in the language services industry we are not hiring people who have undergone competency-based skills assessments. This leads to mistrials, misdiagnosis, malpractice lawsuits, and wrongful death lawsuits.

Bring along with you some [visual aids](#) and handouts based on statistics about your state and your issues. In the link we have given you some examples. Refer to it but do not read it.

(SFY 2015 Interpreter Requests for Medicaid and Dept of Social and Health Services)

Consensus-based standards

Legal framework

The [National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act \(NTTAA\)](#) was signed into law on March 7, 1996. This Act made a direct impact on the development of new industrial and technology standards by requiring that all Federal agencies and departments shall:

Use technical standards developed or adopted by voluntary consensus standards bodies if compliance would not be inconsistent with applicable law or otherwise impracticable; and



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Consult with voluntary, private sector, consensus standards bodies and shall, when such participation is in the public interest and is compatible with agency and departmental missions, authorities, priorities, and budget resources, participate in the development of technical standards.

(Summary of the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act)

How does ASTM F2089-15 standard support interpreters in their advocacy efforts?

ASTM International standards are:

- Developed and used voluntarily
- Established and maintained through a process of **consensus** through Technical Committees (TCs)
- Referenced by the government in codes, certifications, regulations and laws
- Cited in contracts

ASTM Technical Committee F43 on Language Services and Products is the main committee. Some of the F43 subcommittees are:

- **Subcommittee F43.01:** F2089-15 Standard Practice for Language Interpretation – published in 2015
- **Subcommittee F43.03:** F2575-14 Standard Guide for Quality Assurance in Translation – published in 2014
- **Subcommittee F43.04:** Standard Guide for Testing Interpreters – under development

ASTM balance of interest:

Producers	Users and general interest
Translators, interpreters: the people who do the work	Academics, those who hire us, or those who are simply interested in our work
No more than 50% of the vote	May have more than 50% of the vote: We have to listen to users!
One vote per organization, not per member	

How are ASTM standards approved?

- Subcommittee balloting: 60% member participation, 66% approval
- Technical committee balloting: 60% member participation, 90% approval. The members of all the subcommittees are members of the Technical Committee.
- All negative votes must be addressed



ASTM F43.01 Language Interpreting Drafting Group	
<u>USERS</u>	<u>PRODUCERS</u>
✓ US GOVERNMENT AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE	✓ CONFERENCE INTERPRETER (AIIC)
✓ AGENCY OWNER	✓ STATE CERTIFIED COURT INTERPRETER
✓ COURT INTERPRETER COORDINATOR	✓ FEDERALLY CERTIFIED COURT INTERPRETER
	✓ CERTIFIED MEDICAL INTERPRETER
	✓ CERTIFIED ASL INTERPRETER

ASTM F2089-15 consensus definitions

Interpreting — the process of first fully understanding, analyzing, and processing a **spoken** or **signed** message and then faithfully rendering it into another spoken or signed language.

Sight Translation — the rendering of a written document directly into a **spoken** or **signed** language, not for purposes of producing a written document.

Simultaneous Interpreting — the rendering of a **speaker’s** or **signer’s** message into another language while the **speaker** or **signer** continues to speak or sign.

Consecutive Interpreting — the rendering of a **speaker’s** or **signer’s** message into another language when the **speaker** or **signer** pauses to allow interpreting.

(Standard practice for Language Interpreting)

ASTM F2089-15 number of interpreters required

Consecutive interpreting

To ensure interpreting quality and accuracy, it is recommended that **two interpreters** be hired for meetings **longer than 2 h** or dealing with complex, technical, and/or specialized subjects.

Simultaneous Interpreting

Two interpreters shall be assigned per language for any event lasting over 1 hour. An additional interpreter may be assigned when the team is required to interpret bidirectionally.

ASTM F2089-15 legal interpreting definition

Court interpreting (aka *Judicial Interpreting*) — interpreting in the **courtroom**.

Depositions fall into court interpreting category because **testimony is given under oath**, and afforded the same weight as testimony given in the courtroom.



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Out-of-Court Interpreting (aka *Quasi-Judicial Interpreting*) — interpreting of interviews and hearings in settings **that may have a bearing on legal proceedings.**

Warning: These events may have a bearing on legal proceedings!

- ✓ Attorney-client interviews
- ✓ Investigations
- ✓ Law enforcement
- ✓ Boards
- ✓ Commissions
- ✓ Licensing bodies
- ✓ Administrative hearings

Change is about partnership

Networking is crucial for advocacy. You can develop a relationship with legislators at all sorts of events. Make yourself available to them. Make an impression.

- To be a partner, you have to develop a relationship with the person who connected with you.
- Be helpful! Offer solutions to problems they were not aware of.
- Follow up. They do not always answer the first email.
- Call again.
- When they answer the email, you still follow up with tidbits on what they may be interested in.
- Reference your credentials and experience! They pay more attention to people with credentials.
- Keep a continuous and steady stream of information flowing. Often they do not answer, but if you keep the stream of information they may answer every occasionally.

Your goal is to become indispensable in everything regarding interpreting and translation. If you don't know the answer to a question, refer the person to someone who does or investigate it yourself. Don't just complain, bring a solution with you. You can tell them that if they do what you are suggesting, they can solve the problem, the one they probably didn't know existed but that you have made them notice. You have a plan!



How does the US government impact professions?

Through Laws	Through Regulations
Legislative Branch	Executive Branch
What the government should do	How the government should do it
Two levels of legislation: 1. Federal laws: influence US Congress State laws: influence state legislatures	Two levels of regulation: 1. Federal regulations: influence federal agencies 2. State regulations: influence state agencies

Communicating with legislators

To influence legislation (lobbying) you must communicate with those who make it (legislators). Communication strategies:

- **Telephone call:** very short (less than two minutes), good for initial contact and for pressuring on a position.
- **Letter:** Involves more work, and all letters are documented and recorded. Good for non-time sensitive issues.
- **Email:** They receive very many emails per day. Make sure the subject line can be easily classified by staff.
- **In person meeting:** By far the most labor intensive and therefore the most memorable. Take your handouts. This is how you build rapport.

(Communicating with Elected Officials – American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages - ACTFL)

Effective approaches to interact with legislators

- **Town halls.** Legislators regularly hold public in-district events to show that they are listening to constituents.
- **Non-town hall events.** Legislators love cutting ribbons and being in touch with their communities. Invite them to your conferences!



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- **District office meetings.** Every legislator has one or several district offices. Go there and ask to meet with them.
- **Coordinated calls.** Phone calls are more effective than emails or social media. Pick up the phone regarding your issue!
- **Another one...** stories and endorsements from the press. Keep in mind that laws and regulations are influenced by constituents, lawsuits and the press.

For most legislators, it's all about re-election. All politics is local. Elections have consequences.

Legislators care about	Legislators don't care about
Verified constituents from their own legislative district	People from outside the district
Advocacy that requires effort - the more effort, the more they care: Phone calls, personal emails, and especially showing up in person	Form letters, a Tweet, or Facebook comment (unless they generate widespread attention)
Local press and editorials, maybe national press	Wonky language services industry-limited news
An interest group's endorsement (like NAJIT)	A single constituent
Concrete asks that entail a verifiable action - vote for a bill, make a public statement, etc.	A laundry list of all the issues you're concerned about

(Indivisible)

Getting the appointment

There are 100 senators (2 per state) and 435 representatives (based on population). You can find your legislators (2 senators and 1 representative) here: <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members>

Researching your legislators.

When you click on each legislator's name on the results from the above website, you find their voting record and the bills they sponsored as well as a list of the committees they are part of. Then you will be ready to write an email or make a phone call along these lines:

Dear Sen. XXX, I noticed your strong interest in yyy. Did you know that our tax dollars could be used more efficiently if... (Present your policy request here in a way that it supports your legislator's priorities).



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 Prepare for a 2-minute talk on the phone

- Make it interesting to the staffer. Phone calls are much more effective than emails!
- At 2 minutes, they hang up. If you did not get your point across you do not get the appointment!
- They move you in or out of the loop based on those two minutes. They have a process to keep their staff **focused on the issues that matter to the legislator.**



Follow up your call with an email.

- It should be interesting enough for the staffer to forward it to the legislator. Max: 600 words, with attachments or links. Make sure it is pertinent to your legislator's interests and states your advocacy priorities as well.
- Your email should be well written. Get it proofread!
- Your points should be crystal clear. Have someone who is not familiar with interpreting and translation issues edit it for you.
-  Call again to ask what they thought of your email. They get too much email...



Request a face-to-face appointment with your legislator.

- They will say yes but you will most likely meet with a staffer. In reality, the staffer may be very competent in your issues if you made the right pitch.
- If you meet with a staffer who is new to your topic, make it an educational opportunity. There are no wasted meetings!
- Leave multiple copies of your handouts behind, with your business card stapled to each handout.

Following up when reaching out to legislators is the name of the game. It is hard to get through to someone. If you end up talking to staff, do not get discouraged. Aides have the ear of their bosses and they are very knowledgeable about legislation.



Ask for a Capitol Tour!

- They always answer emails asking for a Capitol Tour! Some legislators give the tour themselves.
- The tour itself is not a time for advocacy... but you can leave your handouts at the legislator's office on your way.
- If you can't come to DC, you can also meet with your federal legislators at their office in your home state. Don't miss this opportunity.



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Creating a one-page handout

Your document should have a list of issues and it should be brief and clear. Attach your business card or include your contact information in the handout. Make sure your address is part of the contact information: they look for constituents.

Get information about the demographics in the legislative district, county or state. Find out what your legislature is into. What are the legislator's interests, how does the legislator vote? Get to know your legislator. *This is all on the legislator's website, as indicated above.*

- Graphically guide attention to your main points.
- Make it visually attractive: Use graphics and colors with elegance.
- Edit it carefully.
- Fact-check it carefully.
- Cite your sources.
- Make sure your contact information is on the sheet and staple your business card to the handout.

We are stronger together. Work with the team from your state. You should go to your state legislators' offices as a team if possible. It is our desire to have advocates in every state, and even advocates in every county, working as teams. When you go as a team, make sure you are identified as a team in some way. For example, you might arrive at the same time, wear the same pin, have the same scarf, use the same handout, etc. When many of us approach different legislators, the effect is magnified. Legislators talk to each other and share what they learned from you with their colleagues who represent other districts.

Collegiality: Going to your appointment with a partner shows strength, and it provides for each one of you to have an area of expertise. One of you can be the "facts geek" and the other one can be the "story teller." On the other hand, a newbie can lay out the case, and the other one, with 20 years of experience in the field, can corroborate the situation.

Here are some examples of one-page handouts:

- [Helen's one-pager for US Sen. Wyden](#)
(Interpreting and Translation Issues in Oregon and in the United States)
- [Interpreters United one-pager for Washington State Legislature](#)
(Interpreter Services Procurement Reform)

NAJIT has developed a [handout](#) on the job descriptions of translators, interpreters, transcriber-translators, and terminologists.

(NAJIT Job Descriptions)



Your state’s one-page handout

- Stats on the LEP population in your state from the Migration Policy Institute.
- Who is the certifying body in your state?
- How many certified/registered interpreters are there in your state?
- What problems are you facing as interpreters or translators?
- How is this affecting the LEP population in your state?
- *The NAJIT Advocacy Committee may be available to review your state’s handouts if time allows.*

Meeting with legislators

Who is at the meeting?

For the legislator’s side	For the NAJIT side
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative Assistant or Chief of Staff: evaluates the political outcome of proposals and requests. • Legislative Director: monitors the legislative schedule and makes recommendations regarding the pros and cons of particular issues. • Press Secretary • Scheduler • Caseworker: helps with constituent requests. • Others: Executive Assistant, Legislative Correspondent, Executive Secretary, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You, with your colleagues! • You can go with colleagues from other states. However, it is best to include colleagues from your state if possible. • Meet as a team ahead of time and decide what aspect of the issue each of you will address. At the meeting, it will be obvious that you are a team. • One of you could be the designated note-taker of follow-up issues, etc. This is the professional thing to do here!

It is OK to go with colleagues who are not from your state. They could have a lot to add to your points!

Remember to collect the business cards of the people who were at the meeting so you can follow up. Exchanging cards is standard practice at these meetings.

Showing up

Dress

- Look professional
- Wear something that identifies you as a team (the NAJIT pin or T-shirt, for example)
- Wear comfortable shoes. A Capitol Hill block or hall is long!



Demeanor

- Don't act like you are too impressed with them. Act like you do this every day.
- Remember that though your idea may be new and exciting to you, turning it into a law or a regulation is a very arduous and complex process!

What to do during the visit

- **Tell your story** while referring to the handouts you will leave behind.
- **Watch the clock.** Even if they start late, you will leave on time.
- **Get there 15 minutes early!** Watch how others move in and out of the meetings. Watch how the staff handles the phone. Pick up a DC brochure.
- If the staffer is delayed, relax and say it's fine, and **keep taking [mental] notes** about how the office works. Don't leave. They will send another staffer if you wait long enough.

The conversation

- **Be political.** Legislators want to represent the best interests of the constituents in their legislative district. All politics is local.
 - **Be responsive.** Be prepared to answer questions or provide additional information, in the event the member expresses interest or asks questions.
 - **Stick to the issue.** Your time is limited, and they value informed, focused meetings.
- ✓ **Tip:** You may want to prepare by role playing with a friend who pretends to be the legislator you are going to visit!

(Visiting Capitol Hill - ACTFL)

Follow up

It starts five minutes after the meeting! Right after meeting, go for coffee to debrief. Write down the reactions of the people you met with:

- What made them twitch?
- What questions did they ask?
- Who asked the questions?
- When did they ask for your cell phone to write down a contact?
- What made them sit up straight?
- What other comments did they make?



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The next day: Send the staff a thank you note with a summary of the meeting and the issues you plan to follow up on.

One week later: Write a report and send it to the NAJIT Advocacy Committee.

One month later: Send the staff further information on the issues that were discussed in the meeting. Make sure you always use the same email subject line.

Continue to **follow up on a regular basis** throughout the year.

You will occasionally get a response. **Do not get discouraged** if you do not hear back from them.

[How do you know your visit made a difference?](#)

You made a difference when...

- Legislators and administrators consult with you when they have a question regarding translation or interpreting
- Your colleagues start consulting with you when they have an issue
- The legislators begin using your talking points at public or private events
- Unexpected stakeholders use your talking points to advance your agenda
- A bill is introduced
- A regulation is created or changed
- We get a raise!



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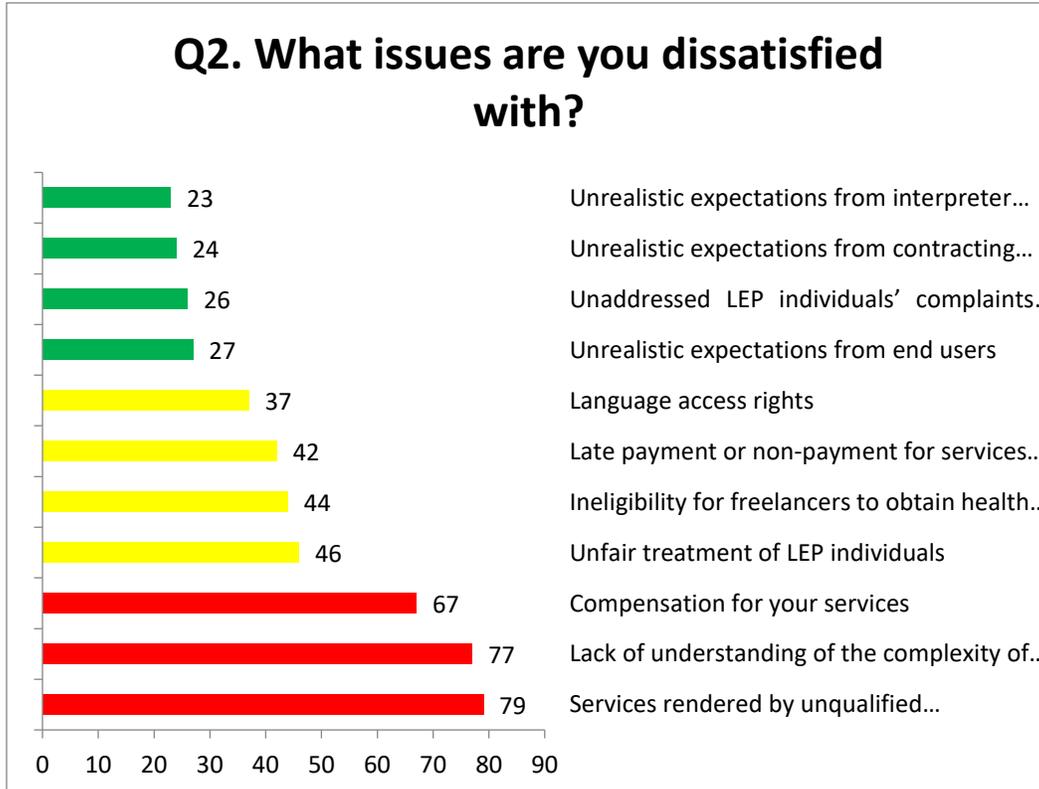


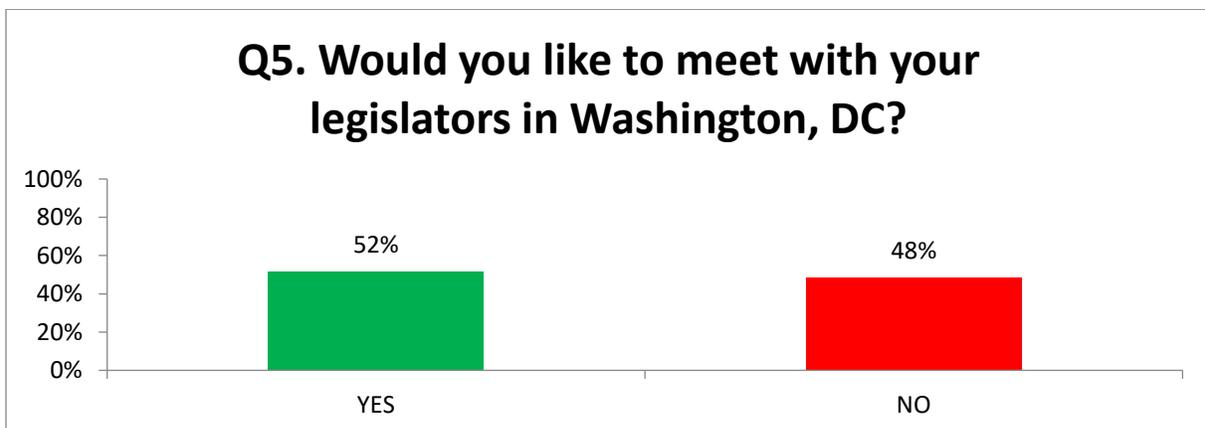
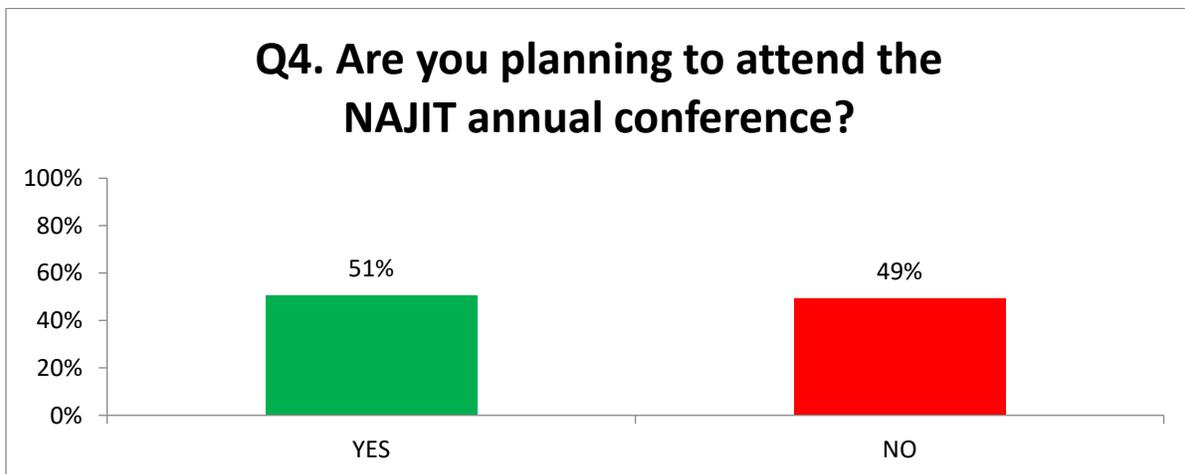
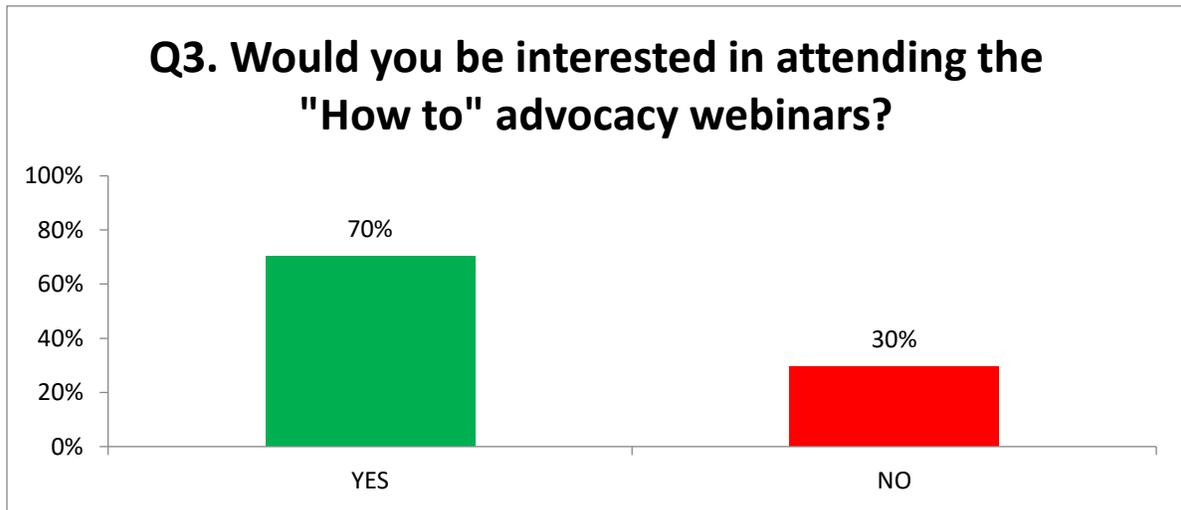
Appendix A : NAJIT Advocacy Survey

NAJIT ADVOCACY SURVEY

Feb 2017 N=91

Population surveyed NAJIT Active Members (N=850)
 Survey sent on February 14, 2017
 Survey closed on February 25, 2017
 Total respondents 11% (N=91)







What other issues regarding state of the interpreting profession are you dissatisfied with?

The following were individual answers submitted under “Other”. The NAJIT Advocacy Committee has classified them and edited them for publication. Some answers that are not published here have been submitted to the Board for consideration because they are about NAJIT policies.

Compensation (NAJIT might be precluded from addressing these issues due to FTC regulations)

- Lack of a tiered system for pay, increases and advancement for court interpreters.
- No distinction between staff interpreter and freelance rates.
- Experience and level of academic education not taken into consideration to establish pay rates.
- No extra pay to use translation skills for court staff interpreters although not all staff personnel has the same set of skills.
- No payment or underpayment for commute time, mileage, tolls and parking expenses.

Best Practices

- Need for training for all interpreter service users to provide a good and realistic understanding of the profession and the role of interpreters and how cultural complexities can affect language interpretation.
- Need for compliance to existing regulations requiring the use of certified interpreters by all legal related entities.
- Need to resist approval of lower standards for interpreters (e.g., “Conditionally Approved”) and use of other bilingual court personnel instead of certified court interpreters.
- Fear that the Executive Orders regarding language access will be overturned.
- Lack of Federal certification for many languages (e.g., Arabic, Vietnamese, Russian).
- Level requirements so that all interpreters and translators have the same obligations to take classes, pass exams, and have certifications and CEUs in order to work for the courts.
- Raise expectations for AOC certification.
- Leveling requirements of administrative courts to use certified court interpreters.

Respect and Recognition

- Lack of professional recognition. Treatment unequal to other professional service providers.
- Change the perception of professional interpreters and translators to obtain the respect and remunerations commensurate with experience and professionalism.

Language Companies

- Concerns that language companies are taking over the provision of interpreting services in entire court systems.
- Language companies being contracted to provide remote interpreting services to State and Federal courts.

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