



>> MAUREEN JOHNSON: Hello and welcome to the "Disability Policy Seminar: Orientation." My name is Maureen Johnson, and I'm the program specialist for the technical assistance team and I also coordinate all of the events for the emerging community. We'd like to welcome you today. Before we begin I would like to address a number of logistical details. Because of the number of participants, please remain muted, there will be a time for questions and questions will be read aloud to accommodate our attendees. We have CART/captioning available. If you'd like to access it, please press the CC button to view subtitles. This webinar is being recorded and will be available following this event along with a written transcription. Please join me in welcoming our first presenter, Jessica Huddleston.

>> JESSICA HUDDLESTON: Thank you, we'll hear from others, and I want to introduce the program specialist and Kiki Oyetunji, the emerging leaders intern, both Maureen and Kiki will be monitoring the chat as share information with you.

Maureen, next. And next, there you go. And a little bit about me. I am from Oklahoma, third year, doctor of audiology student at the University of Oklahoma, science center, I was a fell -- LEND fellow last year and I have hearing loss, and following it for myself, my parents, and when I'm not working, I love drinking coffee and spending time with family and friends and also (indistinguishable) often.

Rylin, why do you think participating in DPS is important?

>> RYLIN RODGERS: As your fellow coffee lover, it's nice to spend Friday afternoon with you all. I think that DPS is important for a lot of reasons. One, it's an incredible opportunity to learn. We all have been engaged in learning all year. Many of us are engaged in learning throughout our lives, but it's a way to know what happens happening right now in disability policy, what's happening at the federal level and how it touches all of our lives. I think that's a really important piece.

I think another incredibly important piece, it's a chance to share your voice. You are so important to making sure that policy works well for individuals with disabilities and their families and the systems that are designed to serve people with disabilities and to serve all Americans. If our voices aren't engaged, we're not able to make the difference.

I think the other reason that DPS is so important, it's a real chance to take the knowledge that you have from different parts of your life. Whether you're a person interested in research, direct service, wants to be a clinician, a person who is still designing your career path but has lived experience, family connections to disability, or maybe you're all of that. It's a real chance to bring that to members of Congress.

On the next slide, I was thinking about this last night, about this year at DPS. And why this year is so important. And this may sound a little bit hokey or overly exciting, but the reality is, we're in an incredibly important moment in America. We've had an incredibly difficult year. We have lost over 460,000 Americans to the COVID pandemic. We have learned really clearly about some of the problems in systems and about how we're not serving all Americans and all individuals well and that we're not doing a good job at counting and representing individuals. And so all of that has created a chance to do better. And the new administration and the new Congress has a real interest in making big progress on disability issues.

So a couple of weeks ago we heard from the President about his American jobs plan. And in that plan, he had an idea for \$400 billion, which is a number that's so big that my head just kind of hasn't gotten around it to change the way that home and community-based services work for people with disabilities. Another incredibly important part about that plan, he wanted to work on workforce participation, making sure that people with disabilities get paid a meaningful wage and have access to competitive employment, to do the jobs that we all need done in America.



And so we're at a time where there is a priority, and big decisions are being made. It's an incredibly important time to come this year to DPS. Your voices are needed as this country starts to look at how do we do better, and how do we make sure the choices we make work for people with disabilities.

>> JESSICA HUDDLESTON: Thank you, Rylin. It's important to hear why this is such an important time as we lead into this Disability Policy Seminar. My next question is for Liz. Can you tell us a little bit what to expect?

>> LIZ WEINTRAUB: Yes, and this is one of my favorite, favorite subjects, as a policy -- actually one of my favorite conferences. Things to note is the conference, it's actually called a seminar, but our conference is April 19th through the 22nd, which is Monday through Thursday of next week. You can still register for students and self-advocates, and the price is \$135, or standard is \$225, and there's a link in there on the screen for -- to the full schedule on how to register. So please register and come and join us. Thanks.

And there's a lot of people coming to DPS each week. I know that can be overwhelming. It was for me before I went. But please, please don't make that a barrier for coming or not come. You'll make some friends and connect with people, and who will be at DPS are people from the Arc, people from the autism Society of America, people from the American association on intellectual and developmental Disabilities, IIDD and National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities, the national down syndrome Congress National Down Syndrome Congress, TASH, united cerebral palsy United Cerebral Palsy, and self-advocates becoming empowered, as people refer to them, the people-first organizations all over the country. It should be a great group of people.

And some other resources that are online for all the people, <https://disabilitypolicyseminar.org>, and then the webinar, on this webinar, the guide for who is at the conference of the facts sheets, and I think they're in plain language as well. Or at least I hope that they are. The web page has a full schedule and prerecorded sessions, and the Zooms have platform guides. And those are on the screen.

Do you want to switch, and I'll pass it to whoever comes after me.

>> JESSICA HUDDLESTON: Thank you, Liz, for sharing that, and thank you, Kiki and Maureen, for putting this in the chat box. I know this is the first time that DPS is online. Can you tell us what that might look like?

>> DENISE ROZELL: Well, there are some timelines to go through, it looks like, and I want you to understand kind of the things you could be doing now because it's online. Some of these things we would be doing together if we were together, but since it's going to be online, the things you could be doing right now leading into DPS, I hope, it's not too late to schedule your Hill visits. I know each of the people on this call are scheduling Hill visits individually or as groups from your state. So it's not too late to do that.

If you're having any issues with that, you can contact, if you're from the LEND or the UCEDD folks, contact Rylin Rodgers or if you're -- I know I've talked to some of you already, and you don't have to make those appointments just during this DPS time. So if somebody gets back to you and says, I can't meet with you on Thursday, which is when a lot of people are scheduling the meetings, say, I could meet with you on Friday. How about Friday, how about the next week? It's important to do those Hill visits, and it's all by Zoom, obviously. You're going to do a Zoom Hill visit or some of you might do a conference call visit, but we hope it's Zoom so you can see each other.

There are some prerecorded. They're on the app, on the website already. Go back, Maureen,

it's okay. They're on the app already, and I know Liz has one that she and Lauren and folks have done on what are regulations, what are they all about, and there are some other things up there too so you can watch some prerecorded sessions.

Then next week we have the formal DPS. There are sessions -- okay. I need to go back again, Maureen, because I'm reading. There are some sessions on Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday. Keep in mind, those sessions are at different times each day. So it's not the same time every day. So make sure you check. And during those, there are -- there are some plenary sessions where all of us are going to be together and then there are concurrent sessions, sessions where there are a couple of sessions going on at once, and you can choose which one you want to go to. That's up to you.

On Monday, there's this networking social hour after all of the sessions. On Tuesday, there's a DPS Town Hall which is going to be open questions, Town Hall meeting kind of sessions. And then the closing session is on Wednesday. And I will say for the college policy folks, you have some happy hours, so check that agenda too.

Okay, Maureen, next one. You can go in and look at all of this stuff and plan your day on the online schedule. So when you go, either the DPS website has the whole schedule on it, but also the app has the whole schedule also, and you can plan your day. So if there's some time when you don't want to watch one of the sessions going on, go watch another prerecorded session instead. That would be a good use of your time.

And as my friend Liz always said, don't forget to take breaks, even if it's five minutes where you turn off your camera and go get tea or coffee, for those coffee drinkers, since we started with coffee. So just know that you can step away and then come back.

Okay. So next slide. There's also -- if you -- there's a -- you've gotten a personal login key for the platform they're using, it's called eventscribe, and if you haven't, email events@thearc.org. You know some people whose login keys ended up in the spam folder or junk file. I know a few that didn't get them when they should have. I also know they have reached out to that email address and have gotten their keys. So if you're missing your event key to get into the platform, that's how you find it. And then when you get in there, they'll prompt you to enter your information.

The other thing to say, there's also some ways, as with a lot of platforms, you can go in and create your own personal space in there, talk to people, do all of that. So personally, I haven't done it yet, but I'm planning on going in there and looking around before Monday so I know where everything is.

Okay. I think that's the end of mine for right now. Right, Jessica? I'll send it back to you.

>> JESSICA HUDDLESTON: Thanks so much, Denise, and it's helpful to have that written down, events@thearc.org, if you have any questions logging in.

Rylin, I know that (indistinguishable) are a big highlight of DPS. Can you talk through the steps of what you recommend to make sure we're really prepared for this?

>> RYLIN RODGERS: Absolutely. And I will echo Denise's point. It's not too late, know that we are happy to help you folks, and it doesn't have to happen next week. I will also say that my tip for all of you are to keep these steps close at hand, because you could use them for DPS, but you could also use them to reconnect the next time you want to meet with a member of Congress and their staff, to highlight an issue that you're working on or to share and follow-up. So I would encourage you to think that through.



So the very first step is finding your federal officials. We want you to connect with your two senators. For those of you who live in a state, we all have two senators and they serve the entire state, so they're great to meet with. And then your one congressional representative, depending where you live. If you're struggling with figuring that out, you can go to the Congress.gov website and type in your address and they'll tell you who your representatives are so you have all that information.

If you live in a territory or the District of Columbia, you'll have someone who will come up under the representative section and you will not have US senators. Some get a chance to visit with more than one US Senator, based on where we live and based on where the program is. So a person in a university might get to meet with a Senator where the university is or the LEND.

On the next slide, after you've figured out who your folks are, your second step is to schedule the meeting. So it's really helpful to think about it as, sometimes we need to schedule more than one way. The way that most want us to schedule is to go to the website and make a request for a meeting. They have a form to fill out, you put your information in, and they'll get back to you.

Sometimes we don't get an answer from that forum and we need to follow-up. And our suggestion is, let us know when that's happening, because we have email addresses for the staffers for each office that work on disability issues, so we can send you those email addresses and then you can view the script or email, include your information and send an email directly to a human instead of a form for a follow-up.

My other suggestion is that if those things don't work, we can go really old-fashioned and call. Calling the office and saying, you know, I've put in a form, I sent an email and I have not gotten an appointment. Help me get an appointment. So sometimes it takes more than one try, and I encourage people not to be discouraged. Kind of embrace the challenge of it, and know that we're here to help.

So you've found your member, you've made your appointment. So we're up to step 3. Really, this is more detailed about the tips for scheduling. Good, we're on to step 3. So we're at the visit. That's where we're going to be next week. Some of you will have visits as early as Monday morning before we dive into the seminar. Think about what you want to say. A lot of us have a lot of things that we're passionate about. Focus. Focus on the things that are happening right now and where we can make the biggest impact. So we've kind of put it into three buckets. I've talked a little bit about the home and community-based services bucket and the other bucket, one is appropriations, which sounds like an incredibly boring world, but it really isn't. It's about the funding that makes our programs work. For those of you involved in inclusive post-secondary programs, you'll want to share the good work happening at your program, how you got chosen and how other people should have the opportunity. That's a way for Congress to learn why it's important to spend money, or appropriations, on that program.

The same for UCEDD and LEND and all of those programs at AUCD. If you have seen the benefits of being connected, educate your members on Congress about why these funds matter in their state is incredibly important. They need to know what's happening and how their money is being used so they know the value of the money. And if you have some time to dig into things that are happening now, they're all trying to figure out what to do with these giant, big infrastructure plans, the American jobs plan, and to say, you know, it's really important that those plans work for all Americans and all Americans include Americans with disabilities. And let

them know, when you graduate from college, if you're a person with a disability, you want a real job and competitive wages and let them know why. Let them know about the value of home and community-based services for the systems that you've worked in as a trainee, the systems that you've experienced as a family member, or the systems that you've experienced as a person with a disability. Why community living is so valuable. What you've learned about it in COVID. So really digging in. We've given some talking points. You have those. But you can make them your own.

There may be other issues that you want to touch base on, and I would encourage you to think about how do you get it all in and think about sticking to the ones that are most moving at this point. To start with your priorities. If you want some extra time, you can send a follow-up email or request another meeting. It doesn't all have to be in this one meeting.

Which brings us to step 4. After your Hill visit, probably the most important part of the Hill visit is the follow-up. Staffers go to lots of meetings and they need help remembering who it is very talked to and what it is you talked about. So sending a follow-up email, sharing the details about what you talked about and why it's important to you creates a relationship. It gives them a chance to come back to you if they need more information, and it gives you an ongoing connection. So there's a lot of really important pieces about that step 4 and the follow-up. We always encourage you to do that part.

And I think my other tip is to really enjoy it. To know that you have so much to offer and that your voice is really important in this space.

>> JESSICA HUDDLESTON: Thanks, Rylin, I think it's a good first step with them. Denise, can you remind us of important tips on policy-makers?

>> DENISE ROZELL: Yes, let me start with what we're doing. Part of our goal here is to build relationships with each of these members. Part of the goal is to educate them. I just got off a call with some of our policy advocates and what Liz and I were saying to them is, you are the ones who have the information. You are the ones who know your story the best. You are the ones who know your field the best. And you are trying to help these members and staff understand, educate them about what you are, about who people with disabilities are, about what your program is, about what LEND is or UCEDDs or IDRRCs, about what your field is. So it is an opportunity to educate them and in turn to influence them how they see public policy.

You know, you have a chance here to influence new laws that are coming, new public policy, to talk about funding as Rylin said, you know, appropriations, like for our networks, like for tips -- money comes from the federal government to our states and programs, and you have a chance to influence that.

Okay. Next slide. But you do want to understand and I've talked about this in one of the other slides and I want to emphasize it here. There are roles we all know that we play as we go in. As a private citizen, any of us can walk into our representatives' office and talk about what you think and what you believe and ask for information on specific legislation and support political candidates. That's your right as a person who -- as a United States citizen or as a person who just lives in this country.

That's different than what many of us are going to be doing next week. If you're going in as a trainee, a LEND trainee, a UCEDD trainee, you're going in to educate. You're not necessarily going in to talk about specific laws. You're going in to inform them. You're going to inform them about the impact of the proposed laws, the impact of current laws. You're going in as a nonpartisan person, or bipartisan, if you want to think of it that way. You're going in without a Democrat or Republican on either side of your name, because you're going in to educate them.

Go to the next slide. So what we need to kind of keep in mind is, as a private citizen, do you it from your personal email account or phone. You can ask them to do a variety of things. You can tell them how you think they should vote. But for most of us next week, we're going in as a trainee. We're going in to educate. Partly because we get federal funding that impacts our program, so we're limited in what we can do. As a trainee, you're doing it from your official email address or your official phone. You're showing them how that program impacts you and the people you serve, if you're someone who serves, you're in a service provider role.

And then what the outcomes are that are important, when you can show them what data you have or what research you have, you're not necessarily saying do this on a particular bill, but you're saying, if this passes, here's what it might look like, or if we do this policy decision, this is how it might impact the people we serve. So that's kind of the educating/advocating conversation that for most of you will be really important. We can answer more questions on that if we need to. I think that's the end of mine again, Jessica, yeah?

>> JESSICA HUDDLESTON: Yeah. Really helpful as we go into these Hill visits, and I'm excited for this DPS week. I know it's going to be good to learn and correct. Rylin, do you have any other pieces?

>> RYLIN RODGERS: Yes, I'm excited for this week too. I'm sure you all have really exciting weekend plans. But I recommend that in addition to the fun spring activities that you spend some time diving into things you want to learn more about in the policy space. Also, if you don't do it this weekend, these are great resources that are always available for you. At AUCD, we have two -- Tuesdays with Liz. You met Liz, and she has an accessible looking at different policy issues. So if there's something you're interested in, you might tune into Tuesdays with Liz to learn more about it.

We also love our Disability Policy News, comes out every morning, gives you an idea of what's going on in the policy space and what action you can take. You can find the archives of ones that have happened over the last couple of months on our website, and you don't have to be connected to AUCD or a current training to subscribe. It's free. We're happy to have you at any point.

We also have a blog where you can dive into some issues, particularly that home and community-based service and employment piece and learn about that on our policy platform. You've got our toolkit, you've got our priorities. You might want to take a really deep dive, if you're Liz and I policy level wonk and want to take a look at what's going on next week, the consortium for citizens with disabilities Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities, which is what is going on and there's a lot of detail there, letters on different issues and an idea for how the disability community is responding. And it's also a good idea to see what your member of Congress has been up to. We all, for free, can track our members of Congress on Congress.gov and find out when they are co-signing a bill, sponsoring a bill, and knowing the important committees.

There's lots of ways to take a deep dive and to get the information in a way that works best for you. If you want to learn any more of any of these pieces, know that we're a resource for you going forward.

And then sort of the next space, we wanted to leave plenty of time to answer your questions. There have been some in the chat. So we'll do a little bit of a Q&A there, turning to Maureen and Kiki to help us know which ones we should take a look at. But if you don't get your question

answered today, you have the ability to reach out to us at any time.

So Maureen, are there questions you want to voice for us?

>> MAUREEN JOHNSON: Thank you, Rylin. I'm looking in the chat. Please feel free to put your questions in the chat as well. If you feel more comfortable speaking your question, you can also unmute yourself and we could have someone on our team answer your question.

>> RYLIN RODGERS: I do see that at least two have come to me as direct messages. One was from a specific state saying they were running into a barrier to get ahold of specific Congressman's office. I went ahead and tried to answer that and send an email address from that office. So know that that's a fair question and we can help give you that answer.

The other one was really a great question about if I'm nervous and I'm doing this by myself, are there ways I can work with other people. So this individual was saying that they're from a program, doesn't sound like other people in their program are coming to DPS, that they haven't been organizing together, so they're wondering if other advocates from their states will be at DPS. Liz shared that great list of lots of great organizations that are coming to DPS. So we do know in many states there are many, many people coming, and there are organized by state teams. I don't know for sure about that one state and the captain, but I would ask that person make sure to drop their email in the chat in their message or send me a direct email because we'll try to get them in touch with their captain.

I would also say that I kind of would encourage you to think about, you know what? Would it be okay to try it on your own? Do you want to sort of make that bold step and have a meeting? Are there enough talking points here? So I wouldn't let being alone be a barrier. In some cases, it's a little bit of an extra power. Because you get to use the whole time. Or the whole meeting. You don't have to share your voice with other people. So there's pluses and minuses to it.

>> MAUREEN JOHNSON: I see a question in the chat right now from -- Sherry Pickett. I'm interested in scheduling a meeting from Kentucky. I'm a self-advocate from Kentucky. Can someone help me schedule this, if it's not too late?

>> RYLIN RODGERS: I did try to send Sherry an email address from the person who handles that issue. My first step would be to send an email to that person. My second step would be to let us know if you need help after that.

>> SHERRY: Okay. Thank you.

>> Someone was raising their hands earlier.

>> DENISE ROZELL: Eric did.

>> ERIC: Eric, this is my question, this is Eric. I just did send -- I went to the AUCD website to let them know that I don't have my event key yet. To do it that way. But when I tried to go through it through my email, I wasn't -- when I went to put their website into my box, it wasn't coming up, what was coming up there was, you know, that error message you get sometimes that the email box wasn't recognized. So my question is for some people who are doing this for the -- who are doing this for the first time, how do they -- how do they contact you guys at The Arc because we're a few days out and I have not received my key.

>> RYLIN RODGERS: Great question. You asked it in such a great way. You talked about going to the website. The really important step to getting a key is not going to the website. It's a DPS and another. But instead to send an email to the email address, events@thearc.org. I just sent you a direct message with that. So you can click on that message and that email is right there for you.

I think that -- I am so grateful for you asking that question, and it does feel a little confusing. There's lots of websites and lots of information.

The other part of my answer is, they're all going to DPS. So if on Monday you're still having problems and you're not getting an answer from the event, please know that Denise, myself, Liz, Jen Tuell, we're all here to help, and we'll put them on the screen again to know that if you run into a problem, we're going to help you work through the problem.

>> ERIC: Yeah, I just wanted to ask. I just went to my email account and noticed that your email hasn't come up yet.

>> RYLIN RODGERS: I just sent it in the chat box of this piece.

>> ERIC: Okay.

>> DENISE ROZELL: Eric, this is Denise. They're working on it today, so if you send them an email today -- I know other people who send an email this morning and they got an answer back. So I know they're working on it today.

>> ERIC: Okay. So -- okay. So when she says it's events@the arc --

>> DENISE ROZELL: It's events, events-v-e-n-t-s at the arc, arc-r-c.org.

>> ERIC: And one of the other questions that I have for you both is that I notice that -- I've been looking, seeing the Tuesdays with Liz, I never saw my article, I mean, my interview I did with Liz a couple of years ago when I was -- when I was down there. So I'm wondering if this stuff ever got out.

>> RYLIN RODGERS: That's a great question, Eric. A transition with our Tuesdays with Liz producer, we have a new Tuesdays with Liz producer. She's on this call. Her name is Aryana, so let's get connected after this to follow up with Liz and Aryana.

>> I'll put my email in the chat. But all of those will be moved to the general next month. If that helps. But I'll put my email in the chat.

>> LIZ WEINTRAUB: This is Liz. It's great to see you. I'm sorry, as friends, that we have had some transitions. Maybe we can follow up with you next week or the week after. I'm sure next week if it's busy for us, but the following week.

>> ERIC: Yeah, thank you, Liz. It would have been nice two years ago when -- after the interview if I could have gone back and watched it.

>> LIZ WEINTRAUB: Yes.

>> RYLIN RODGERS: It looks like Sharon is raising her hand? Maureen, who is next?

>> MAUREEN JOHNSON: Sharon has her hand up, and thank you, Eric, for your question as well.

>> SHANNON: No probe. This is for Liz and AUCD staff for competitive employment, beyond a great that people with disabilities want to make more money than in sheltered workshops, and I agree on that one. What do you all think?

>> RYLIN RODGERS: Yeah, I'm going to use my hand-clapping emoji. We agree. If there's anybody on the call from Washington state, they just passed state legislation, so cheering for all of you, and it's absolutely a topic that Congress is taking a big look at right now. This might be the year.

>> MAUREEN JOHNSON: Great. I see a question from Betsy Humphreys.

>> BETSY: I'm clapping, clapping for Shannon.

>> MAUREEN JOHNSON: Great. Claps all around. Any other questions? Feel free to put it in the chat or you can raise your hand using the feature at the bottom of your Zoom console.

>> RYLIN RODGERS: Maureen, I see a question, and the question is, is the events key the same as the access key. And I'm wondering if Denise has been doing some troubleshooting with this or Jen has the most accurate answer, Jen Tuell, Tuesday I don't want to misspeak.

>> DENISE ROZELL: My understanding was it was the same. Yes. It's the access key. And --

yeah.

>> KATHLEEN: Can I also ask this? This is Kathy Becht, that the eventscribe is where we'll see it recorded and all of that. We don't go to a separate Zoom site or anything like that, it's all on that eventscribe.net?

>> DENISE ROZELL: That is correct. Thanks, Kathy. That's helpful to be really clear about this. This is the first time, and I will say, honestly, it's the first time we've all done this virtually, so I would not at all be surprised if there are questions next week and if there are things we need to troubleshoot, because this is the first time I've done it this way. So feel free. We will be watching our emails next week, and as Rylin said, Rylin and me and others will be troubleshooting if you have a question or a problem. We may not have the answer, but we'll try to figure it out with you.

>> MAUREEN JOHNSON: I see another question in the chat from Anne Stevenson. So what is the plan next week for virtual Hill visits? And feel free to unmute if you want to add to your question, Anne.

>> DENISE ROZELL: Hey, Anne. Anne is one of the big college policy advocates. So you guys, I don't know what your plan is specifically, because everybody has been setting up their own visits. But if you've got -- so I don't know if you have visits set up for next week, I know you've been trying to. I'll be happy to talk to you more about that, since I'm your coach, and we can connect with Jen and see if any of them have come through. And if they haven't, probably you and Jen and I should check to make sure something happens, okay? Good question. You guys have all been doing your own reach-out, just like everybody else on the call. I will say, again, I've had some trouble-shooting in the last few days. If you're having trouble hearing back from offices, you are not the only ones. As Rylin said, it's been tough, and in COVID, it's even harder. So I've been troubleshooting with teams who have had a hard time. So we can check back with Jen and see what you guys already have scheduled, okay?

>> RYLIN RODGERS: It's also, when we're dealing with meetings with members of Congress and their staff, to know that sometimes we think -- find out things at the last minute or they change at the last minute.

>> DENISE ROZELL: That's correct.

>> RYLIN RODGERS: And that would be true if we were all in person. We might show up to a meeting that we had scheduled and planned for and walk into the office and then learn that a Congress person got pulled into another meeting. That's also happening in the virtual world. So in some ways, it's good that we get to have that real-life experience, and in others, it's a reminder to be flexible and know that if we can't get it done next week, that's not the end. We have a chance to follow up in another place. So even if it feels disappointing or frustrating, I would encourage you to use it as a little bit of a challenge and make sure that you get that meeting that is important because your choice is so important. And even if it doesn't happen by next Thursday, in some ways, it will be a little bit more powerful if it happens at a later date when it's not on your mind, and then your voice is has more meaning. So don't be discouraged and use it as a challenge to make sure you're getting what you need.

>> DENISE ROZELL: Yeah.

>> MAUREEN JOHNSON: We have a raised hand. Do you want to start your video or you can unmute yourself.

>> BOB: Thanks, I'll turn the video on. Just a quick question. Is there any online resource that might list some tactics to utilize should our Congressman or Senator attempt to deflect a specific issue back to the state? I'm thinking of things like compensation for the -- you know, home health workers and such that have really been proven to be a detriment to having proper staffing

during this pandemic. People around able -- they're able to get more pay elsewhere, so they're not, you know, taking the opportunity to use a home health aide or what have you. So I can see them saying, hey, that's something you need to address at the state level, through a minimum wage raise or however. How do you attempt that deflection, just as an example?

>> RYLIN RODGERS: I love that question. The challenge of disability policy, it often has a federal piece and a state piece. I would say it's some of the challenges and some of the strengths. You know what's working and what's not working at that state and say that's a big issue, you can push back and say it's not working at your state and what the state needs from the federal government. I always like to do that pushback in reminding them, these are state and federal partnerships. That's true of Medicaid for home and community-based services, true in the education space, and true of how we do labor policy or job policy in America. So it's a common discussion about, oh, well, you are talking about something that the state needs to solve. And there is a chance for you to really talk about what's happening at your state and what you need from the federal government, because states can't do this alone because these programs are all partnerships.

And I think that's another good question about -- if I'm worried about, am I going to get some pushback on these kind of things, I think my number one tip is always to go back to your expertise. To stand on what you know. And then if there's a question you're not able to, take that and say you'll follow up and find that information and use it as a way to be a relationship-builder. There's some power in saying, I don't know the answer to that, but I'll get back to you. So I think it's a real give and take. I will also say it's the most common experience not to get a lot of pushback. So if you're worried that there's going to be a debate, like your high school debate club, the experience is usually more listening than a real debate about issues.

>> BOB: Thank you.

>> MAUREEN JOHNSON: I see we have another raised hand from Danielle. .

>> DANIELLE: Hi, everyone. I just had a quick question. Once we've registered and done all the preregistering for the events we want to attend, how do you go about logging in to each event? .

>> RYLIN RODGERS: That's a great question. It was sort of brought up earlier about do we have to go to different places or once we're into the eventscribe, that's it. And the good news is, once you're into that website, you'll be able to get to all of the different sessions that you want and see the prerecorded videos. So the good news is, you don't have to click a million different places. Once you're in that site, everything you need will be there.

>> DANIELLE: Okay. Thank you.

>> RYLIN RODGERS: You're welcome.

>> MAUREEN JOHNSON: I see -- go ahead, Liz.

>> LIZ WEINTRAUB: So Nicky (phonetic) said, would this be a good conference for me to join if they have a disability, and I think this is definitely one of the best conferences. Because it's about us. It's about us as people with -- Congress needs to hear from us. And I was talking to -- nothing about us without us. And we need to be speaking up.

>> DENISE ROZELL: And I think Jennifer was also the same person earlier who asked, can you still register. And the answer to that is yes. I've done that today too. I had a problem with one of the registrations that I did for one of the college people and I had to reregister her, and I did that today. So you can still register.

>> LIZ WEINTRAUB: And my other favorite saying is, all means all, and that means that we all, all the voices need to be heard in Congress, in the halls of Congress, or the virtual halls of Congress.

>> MAUREEN JOHNSON: Yes, definitely well said, Liz. Jennifer, did you have your hand

raised? Did you want me to spotlight you for your question?

>> JENNIFER: Yeah, either-or. I'm kind of new here. Not new to advocacy, but new to you guys. I just -- the disability policy seminar by accident, and I'm from Ohio, so thank you. I hope there are still slots available to the people in Congress and, yeah, I'm very glad to join you. And I'm hoping by being here this year I'll be included on some kind of mailing list for next year and all that. Okay. Thank you.

>> RYLIN RODGERS: Welcome. We're thrilled you're coming and you're here!

>> LIZ WEINTRAUB: The first mailing list that I think you should go to is the disability policy News. It's a great newsletter that you might want to do that in addition to this.

>> JENNIFER: Thank you. Thank you.

>> MAUREEN JOHNSON: I want to point out another question in the chat from Rachel, saying, are state and federal agencies making considerations to address supports for families and caregivers, especially during the pandemic?

>> RYLIN RODGERS: Yeah, we're -- such a good, timely question. I'm hearing a lot of feedback.

>> DENISE ROZELL: You're muted. Do you want to try again, Rylin? We'll see if it's you. No, you're okay. You're okay.

>> RYLIN RODGERS: Thanks, everybody, for their patience. That was unfortunate. Yes, the short answer is yes. There's a lot happening in this space. The new administration has been working really hard, and their number one priority has been COVID. We've seen a lot of action just this week alone in having new direction to make sure that there is equity and accessibility around their team for caregivers and people with disabilities. And I would also say that is a huge part of the home and community-based service space is really thinking about where we are in America in terms of who is providing care and how much of the care for older Americans and Americans with disabilities is happening in an unpaid way from caregivers, and what do we need to do to make sure that we're not creating barriers in the community in the way and barriers for the person with the disability, and in some ways, barriers for the families. We know that many families have left the workforce in order to keep individuals with disabilities safe by being their primary caregiver in this time.

So it's a conversation we're having a lot of. I think you can be most effective in raising it during your meetings, by focusing on connecting it with policies that are moving right now. So connecting it with the effort to invest in home and community-based services, and really talk about what the needs are for people and caregivers that are connected to that. And I said "connected" a lot of times there, so sorry, but I hope that helps you understand that it's really valuable to talk about policy in a way that means something to members of Congress and their staff that have a to-do list. And we know that on their to-do list are things related to home and community-based service. So if we could talk about our needs and say it in a way to make sense for them to do it, we can have more of an impact. So if we could talk about our needs and say it in a way to make sense for them to do it, we can have more of an impact.

I know we're running out of time. Maureen, final thoughts and next steps for us?

>> MAUREEN JOHNSON: Thank you, Rylin. So I really want to thank all of our presenters today -- Rylin, Denise, Liz, and, of course, our emerging leaders intern Jessica and another shout-out to Kiki for monitoring the chat and putting links in. As this webinar concludes, please provide feedback in our link. It's through a Survey Monkey, I placed the link in the chat. It will also be disseminated shortly after today. This webinar has been recorded and will be available along with a written transcription. So we'd like to thank you all for joining us, and have a



wonderful weekend!
>> HANNAH: You too!
>> Bye, everybody!