

Turning Passion into Legislative Action

AUGUST 20, 2025

Who We Are

- ▶ Vision:
 - ▶ People experiencing an overdose and those administering aid will be able to call 911 for a medical emergency without fear of arrest, criminal prosecution, or probation/parole violations.
- ▶ Mission
 - ▶ To strengthen the current Good Samaritan law with protections for people experiencing an overdose and those administering aid.

Wisconsin Good Samaritan Coalition

► Value Statements

- We believe in the inherent value of every human being.
- We support the enactment of comprehensive legislation that encourages life-saving efforts when a person experiences an overdose and promotes a rehabilitative approach to addiction crisis intervention.
- We are committed to working toward an anti-racist perspective.
- We believe in eliminating discriminatory law enforcement practices that criminalize poverty, addiction and mental illness; end racially biased policing, etc.
- We value lived and living experience of individuals who have used/use drugs.
- We value lived experience in individuals who have experienced an overdose.
- We value lived experience of individuals who have lost loved ones due to an overdose.
- We are non-partisan.

WI Good Samaritan Protections	2013	2017	2020-present	2023 Proposed
Aider- immunity from arrest or charges- paraphernalia, possession of controlled substance, or masking agent				X
Aider- immunity from prosecution- paraphernalia, possession of controlled substance, or masking agent	X	X*	X	X
Aider- immunity from parole, probation or extended supervision revocation		X*		X
OD Survivor (aided)-immunity from arrest or charges- paraphernalia & possession of controlled substance or masking agent				X
OD Survivor (aided)- immunity from prosecution for paraphernalia, possession of controlled substance, or masking agent		X+		X
OD Survivor (aided)- immunity from parole, probation or extended supervision revocation		X^		X

Brief History

- ▶ Started in 2022
- ▶ Senator Jesse James agreed to author legislation
 - ▶ Did not include all the protections
 - ▶ Coalition agreed it was a good start
- ▶ Media stories, letters to the editor, and guest columns
- ▶ Meetings with legislators
- ▶ Webinars

Conferences and Events



Brief History Continued

- ▶ Bill drafted and committee hearings held
 - ▶ November 2023: Hearing held with Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
 - ▶ Passed through committee. Referred to Rules Committee
 - ▶ February 2024: Hearing held with Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee
 - ▶ No committee vote
 - ▶ Legislative session ended before the bill went to the floor



More Information

- ▶ <https://wigooodsamaritancoalition.com/>
 - ▶ Coming soon – opportunities to get involved
- ▶ <https://www.facebook.com/wisconsinwigooodsamaritancoalition>
- ▶ <https://www.instagram.com/wigooodsamaritancoalition/>

How many.....

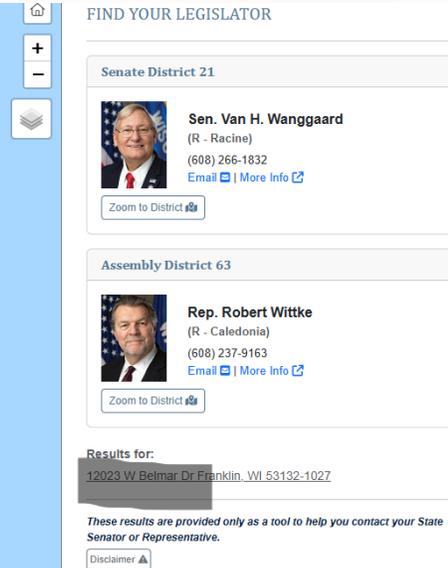
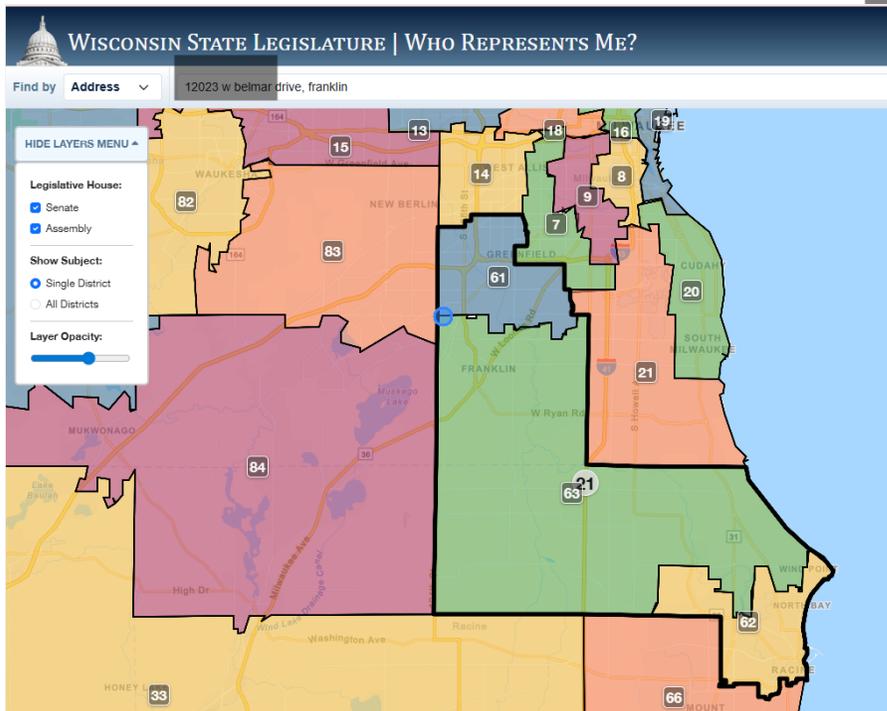
- ▶ Have ever talked to your elected official?

Where Do We Start/Continue?

- ▶ More than 25% of the legislators are new
- ▶ Senators
 - ▶ 15 Democrat
 - ▶ 18 Republican
- ▶ Representatives
 - ▶ 45 Democrat
 - ▶ 54 Republican
- ▶ Ages range from 25 – 81 years
- ▶ 33% are women
- ▶ We need to start with Education

Holding Legislative Meetings

- ▶ Identify your legislator
- ▶ <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/>



Holding Legislative Meetings

- ▶ Recruit others from your community to go with you
- ▶ Meeting options:
 - ▶ In-District - Identify a location in your community for a 30-minute meeting (coffee shop or public library)
 - ▶ Virtual
 - ▶ At the Capitol
- ▶ Schedule the meeting
 - ▶ Call or email the candidates office and ask to speak with the scheduler to set up a meeting
 - ▶ *Hello, my name is _____ and I am with the Wisconsin Good Samaritan Coalition in _____'s district. We would like to set up a 20-30 minute meeting to discuss protections for people experiencing a medical emergency in our community.*

Holding Legislative Meetings

- ▶ Prior to the meeting
 - ▶ Gather background information
 - ▶ Review the legislator's past positions from prior meetings, forums, news articles, website etc.
 - ▶ Learn about who they are as an individual
 - ▶ Prepare for the meeting
 - ▶ Create your narrative story
 - ▶ Share the key points from the policy brief
 - ▶ Meet with your group ahead of time to create an outline for the meeting and identify who will lead each talking point
 - ▶ Bring copies of the policy brief to leave with the legislator

Holding Legislative Meetings

- ▶ 1-2 days prior to the meeting
 - ▶ Contact the legislative office to confirm the time and place
 - ▶ If the meeting needs to be rescheduled due to other pressing issues select another time and date
 - ▶ Be prepared that a staff person may attend with or in place of a legislator
- ▶ Day of and during the meeting
 - ▶ Give yourself enough time for parking, finding a table, etc.
 - ▶ Be aware that legislators may run late due to back-to-back meetings
 - ▶ Prioritize introductions to build relationships
 - ▶ Stay on message
 - ▶ Refer to the policy brief
 - ▶ Listen carefully to what they have to say
 - ▶ It's ok to say "I don't know, but I will find out and get back to you."
 - ▶ Thank them for their time

Holding Legislative Meetings

- ▶ After the meeting
 - ▶ Document the legislator's responses
 - ▶ Debrief with meeting attendees
 - ▶ Send a thank you note and any follow-up items to the legislator

Other Notes

- ▶ Legislators are just people like you and me
- ▶ Legislators are not the experts
- ▶ Find common ground for future opportunities
- ▶ As of today, there is no bill, so we are not lobbying – this is educational advocacy
 - ▶ ALL constituents have the right to talk to their legislators (may need to be outside of work time)
 - ▶ Follow your organizational policies if you are attending on behalf of an organization

Who Else Do We Need To Talk To?

- ▶ What other community members have influence?
- ▶ Who else needs to hear/understand/appreciate our narrative?
- ▶ Potential examples:
 - ▶ Law enforcement
 - ▶ Health department
 - ▶ Emergency medical services
 - ▶ Local business owners
 - ▶ Others?

Thank you!

- ▶ Kristen Grimes, MAOM, MCHES
- ▶ Chair, Wisconsin Good Samaritan Coalition
- ▶ National Program Director of Prevention and Harm Reduction and WI Director of Prevention Services, Vivent Health
- ▶ Kristen.grimes@viventhealth.org
- ▶ 414-225-1624
- ▶ <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kristen-grimes-maom-mches/>

DEVELOPING A
**POWERFUL PERSONAL
NARRATIVE**

How Stories Move People to Action

Presented by
Juli Bliefnick

WHAT MAKES A PERSONAL NARRATIVE POWERFUL?

1

Facts

A narrative includes relevant facts or statistics related to your issue

2

Experience

A personal narrative combines the facts with your own experience

3

Urgency

A powerful personal narrative creates a sense of urgency, which moves people to action

WHY NARRATIVE MATTERS



- Narratives create a connection, not only between the facts of the issue and your own experiences, but between you and your audience.
- Sharing your personal narrative is an opportunity to build trust and deepen relationships.
- When shared effectively, your story has the potential to inspire meaningful change.

WE RE CO OR E S T R U C T U R E D E L E M E N T S



Audience & Purpose

Who are you speaking to? What are their values? Why is it important for them to hear your story?



Structure

Do you have a strong introduction? Are you staying within your allotted time? Are you adhering to a framework?

Authenticity

Be specific. Use examples that can be verified. Steer clear of extremes or exceptions.



Emotion and Values

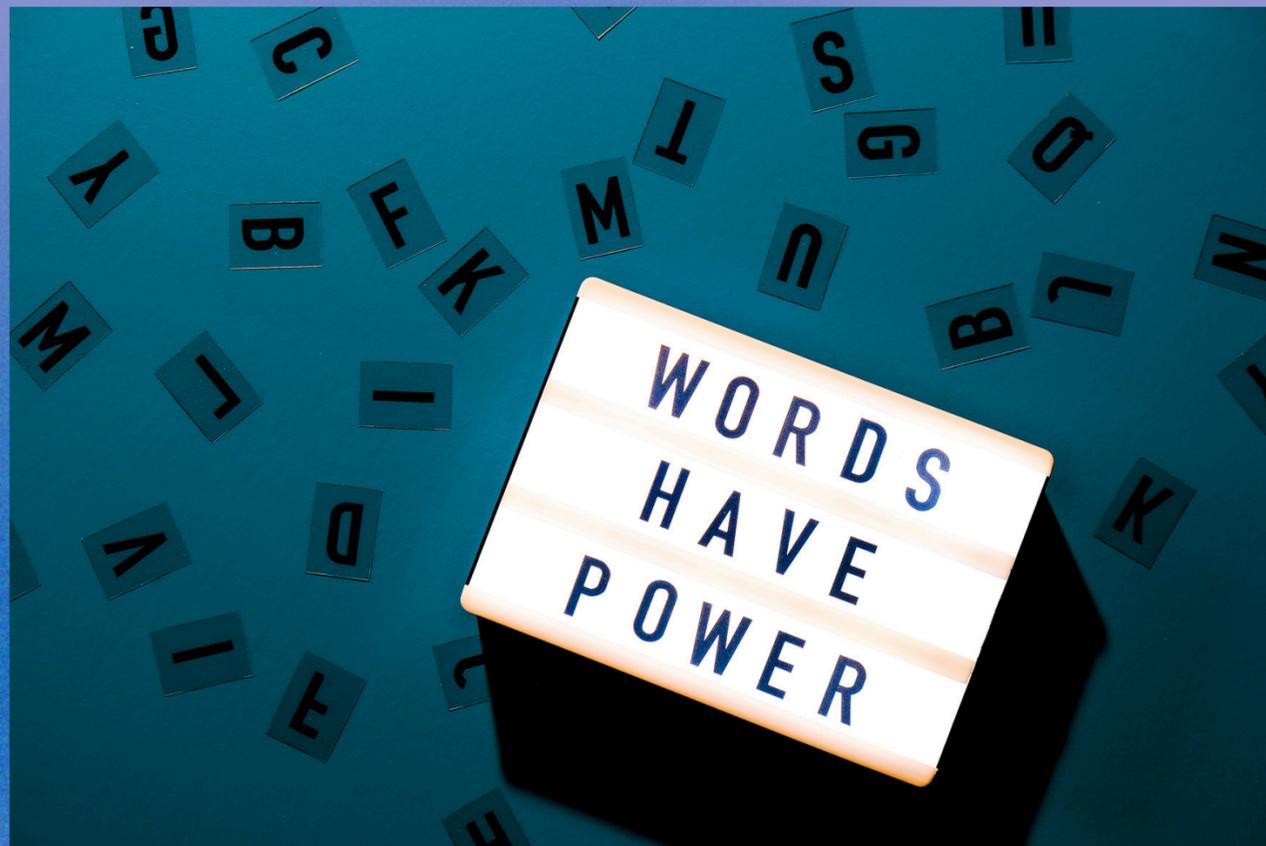
Why should they care? What is at stake? Adjust your story to speak to their values. Build urgency.

Call to Action

What can they do about it? What are some next steps? How can you work together to solve the problem?



THE VPSA STORYTELLING FRAMEWORK



Values

After your attention-grabbing introduction, begin with a value statement.

Example:

“I believe in the inherent value of every human being.”

Problem

State the problem clearly.

Example:

“Under the current law, many people are dying unnecessary deaths because people are afraid to call for help.”

Solution

Offer a solution to the problem.

Example:

“Passing a more comprehensive Good Samaritan Law would save lives.”

Action

Propose an urgent call to action, and make it personal - let them know it is in their hands.

Example:

“You can do your part in saving lives in our state by supporting our cause.”

CONTACT

Juli Bliefnick

juliannbliefnick@gmail.com

(608)516-2101

Marshall Ganz Storytelling Framework

The Story of Self, Us and Now

<https://commonslibrary.org/the-power-of-story-the-story-of-self-us-and-now/>

**MORE
INFORMATION**