ENGAGING IN ADVOCACY

The Advisory Committee on Public Policy (ACPP) is a committee of the Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior (SNEB) that focuses on food, nutrition, and health policy at the national and state levels. Membership for this committee is open to all and is a great place for SNEB members to hone their policy and advocacy skills. SNEB members have an important role to play in supporting the development of nutrition policy, offering lawmakers critical perspectives from working directly with stakeholders who are impacted by these policies.

NUTRITION EDUCATORS ON THE HILL

SNEB members from across the globe gathered for ACPP’s Capitol Hill visit on July 20, 2023. Advocacy experience ranged among attendees, with some having previous experience meeting with legislative staff, and for others, it was their first opportunity to participate in policy-related work. In fact, a few of the individuals were international members who were excited to see democracy in action. Upon arrival on the Hill, SNEB members joined House and Senate staff in a conference room organized by Congressman Josh Gottheimer. The session attended included representatives from the House and Senate Agriculture Committees and the Nutrition and Forestry Committee. After introductions, SNEB members took turns discussing their Farm Bill priorities, supporting each priority point with select data and a personal story. For example, SNEB members discussed the need to expand the SNAP-Ed program to reach more people, enable more organizations to participate, and encourage innovation in outreach and education. A Q&A followed the discussion before ending with networking opportunities. Afterwards, SNEB members separated into groups to visit legislative and committee offices. Interacting with lawmakers and their staff provided members with a better understanding of how to continue engaging in policy-related matters.

CONTINUED ADVOCACY IS NEEDED

Given that Farm Bill negotiations remain ongoing, members are welcome and encouraged to use SNEB’s Farm Bill Priorities in conversations with their local representatives to explain what the Farm Bill means for the communities in which they live and work.

Beyond the Farm Bill, there are myriad opportunities for nutrition educators to participate in advocacy efforts. SNEB members can provide comments in the regulatory process, for example, explaining to agencies like the United States Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration how a proposed rule could impact the communities in which nutrition educators work. Our communities often live with the outcomes of these rules, and comments can help to influence agency decision making in the public’s favor.

SNEB members have a valuable perspective to share with local, state, and federal decision makers. We should continue to make our voices heard to achieve public and planetary health, and to ensure that our communities have what they need to lead healthy and active lives.

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REFERENCES