Student Perspective: Making your voice heard

We live in a great, big world, and can oftentimes find ourselves feeling small and insignificant. However, MSW students Molly Bryant & Harmony Revard Fuller remind us that our voices are not too small to make a powerful impact!

As domestic violence advocates in our ACP concentration year practicums, part of our jobs are to analyze policies and proposed legislation from the viewpoint of survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. After reading through bills for the 2017 Oklahoma legislative session, we noticed that a freshman representative and friend of the Oklahoma Policy Institute (of which we are both alumni of their Summer Policy Institute) had submitted a bill that would have unintentionally increased female incarceration rates and disproportionately punished individuals in domestic violence situations.

We cautiously reached out to the representative who was more than willing to hear our perspective. We organized our research, narrowing our focus on the specific issues we found potentially harmful within the bill, and provided the representative with copies of data to support our position. Our meeting with her lasted over two hours, and we had one of the most interactive and productive meetings. We discovered that she agreed with many of the issues we brought to the table helping us to have a dialogue on a variety of other concerns facing our state. In the end, the representative agreed to withdraw her bill! She was open to listening to us, respected our opinions, and read our research.

Neither of us are constituents of this representative but this was not a barrier for us. It was clear that she wanted what is best for Oklahoma and all it took was for us to nervously reach out to her for our voices to be heard.

Congratulations to Molly & Harmony, and great work!!!

What do you want to see changed? What positive actions are you taking to help make that happen? We’d love to hear from you!