

**The Importance of Career Development for an Uncertain World: Public Policy,  
Legislation and Professional Advocacy**

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Good afternoon. Welcome to the opening session of this NCDA Conference and to Washington, D. C. Let me also give a special welcome to our international friends and colleagues who have come to be with us this week to consider the many important implications of the conference theme “Career Development, Public Policy and Advocacy; Finding our voice and making it heard.” I would urge you to go to their presentations this week and seek an opportunity to speak with these persons because they have been extremely influential in advocating public policy and in studying its characteristics in their nations and in major research studies of career guidance services around the world.

The presence of our colleagues from abroad affirms the importance of the conference’s emphasis on advocacy for public policy in career development. Indeed, our attention to public policy is seen by many observers as critical at this point in our professional history because of the comprehensive changes which are facing people around the world as they attempt to explore, choose, prepare for, make the transition from school to work, adjust to the workplace and construct their careers. We are now witnessing rapid transformations in how work is organized, how it is done, by whom, and the meaning of career in an environment in constant transition. As career counselors and career theorists we are learning a new vocabulary about work and about the effects of globalization that includes such dynamics as organizational downsizing, mergers and

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acquisitions, outsourcing, off-shoring, supply chains, global labor surpluses, growing chasms between haves and have nots, guest workers, the pervasive use of advanced technology in how work processes are implemented, the increasing use of part-time and contingent workers, international economic competition, globalization, the evolution of new career paths, growing expectations that workers will be expected to be their own career managers, and responsible for their own career development: (e.g., life-long learning, employability, and ability to be personally flexible in their need to adapt to constant change in their workplaces.)

More frequent transitions throughout the lifespan will keep many persons in the workforce “on edge,” anxious, stressed and engaged in decision-making over shorter, rather than longer, periods of their work life; individual career development in the future will be less linear and predictable, and greatly affected by interruptions and fragmentation.

While there are other elements of change we could cite: Cornish (2004) in his book *Futuring* has summarized many of these points in his view that “workers will need to change jobs with increasing frequency to stay employed. Most workers will have to reinvent their careers to keep up with a fast changing workplace. To cope with the complexities of the job market and find positions suited to their talents and interests, workers will be more dependent then ever on career counselors, coaches, and mentors.” (pp. 22-23). Thus, directly or indirectly, all of these examples are contextual issues related to career development and, as such, the targets of career interventions and of public policy.

The contextual factors affecting the career development of people around the world require modifications in career theory and practice and in public policy, but they also require each of us to be statespersons for the importance of career development programs, services, and interventions that help persons add intention and knowledge to the substance and purpose of their career behavior. Thus, specialists in career development, however defined, can, do, and must contribute important perspectives and ideas to the on-going national dialogue about public policy concerning (a) goals for career intervention, (b) who will plan and deliver career interventions, (c) to whom and how career interventions will be made accessible, and (d) how counselors with responsibilities for the career development of different population groups can be linked more effectively to create greater efficiency and capacity in career development. Advocates for public policy and the legislation that flows from it must be statespersons who are passionate about the importance of career development, and how to improve it. They must believe that in an uncertain world comprised of a large array of contextual factors that affect the ease, efficiency and equity with which individuals enter and remain in the workforce requires the best programs of career development and of career interventions available.

Before I get specific about the importance of public policy, let me discuss briefly what I have been asked to address this afternoon. There are three parts to my remarks. First, I will attempt to talk in broad terms about public policy and its importance in furthering career development and the provision of career services, career counseling, and related career interventions. I will note that policy-makers and legislators often view career interventions as sociopolitical processes designed to meet specific national goals and that these perspectives change across decades depending on the major economic,

social, or political events occurring at the time: e.g. defense issues, recession, depression, globalization, the need to build human capital and to train the population with new skills relevant to international economic competition. Second, I have been asked to give some examples of my personal experiences in testifying in Congress about various bills that had a career component. Third, I have been asked to identify some do's and don'ts about being prepared, getting involved with, and the timing and presentation of testimony or other input to policy makers.

As I address these three emphases, one issue has to do with the use of the term career development here. In the last 50 years or so the term career development has typically referred to the body of theories and research findings that describe the factors and influences that combine to shape individual career behavior over the life span. In essence, these influences on career behavior and how people respond to them are seen as the targets of the techniques or processes known as career interventions. They include a variety of terms—some are older, some are very recent, and frequently they are used interchangeably even if that is not appropriate. Such terms include vocational guidance or counseling, career counseling, career services, career guidance (the term preferred in Europe and in many other nations), employment or occupational counseling, the practice of career development, career development services. In common use these terms tend to be umbrella terms that subsume methods used to affect or alter career development (or career behavior if you prefer). I mention this matter because some of the vocabulary we use requires us, when engaging in advocacy, to interpret or define such terms in a way that identifies the knowledge we possess; such information helps us, and the policy makers we hope to influence, understand why people engage in or have difficulty with

their decision making, career behavior or more comprehensively, their career development; and, as professionals in career development, we also possess knowledge about the procedures (career interventions) that will facilitate, assist, strengthen, and help persons clarify and give sharper direction to their career behavior. We will find that the term used for career interventions sometimes differs from one piece of legislation to another and from one nation to another. Sometimes our vocabulary can be used in more than one way. For example, sometimes the term career counseling is used as a specific type of career intervention and at other times as the summary of a process which might include the use of several interventions (e.g. career counseling, career assessment, self-directed activities, career information, job shadowing, exploration of particular internet web sites or computer assisted career guidance systems).

I linger on this point to reinforce the message that when you testify about career development or career interventions before policy-makers you need to be sure that you are using appropriate vocabulary as the profession uses it, that you are using the contemporary language of work (e.g. frictional unemployment, structural unemployment, offshoring, etc.) and the current status of research in career interventions (e.g. best-practices, evidenced-based) that relate to the gain in positive career outcomes and the costs of obtaining such gain. Words are important when you engage in advocacy for career development because when you are testifying on public policy or on legislation, you are a statesperson for the field you represent, whether or not you think of yourself in that way. You are not speaking for yourself, you are speaking for a profession and serving as a voice for client groups who may be powerless, without a voice or representation.

## Public Policy

Let me now turn more directly to public policy per se. While there are many definitions of public policy, a typical definition is that public policy can be considered a definite course or method of action selected to guide and determine present and future directions (“Herr and Pinson, (p.199)”.

Policy can also be conceived as the creation of a set of hypotheses that reflect the best ‘guesses’ by which to change the circumstances giving rise to the policy, e.g. concerns for gender or racial equity in pay and opportunities in the workplace, unemployment, integration of immigrant populations. Policy, then, is based on a set of assumptions about the conditions needing change as well as about the actions that will change them.

Policy formulation is typically not a closed system. Some observers would say that it is a porous system, that can be entered at any time by statespersons, advocates, special interests, or lobbyists. Such persons of influence tend to be involved from the beginning of the ideas that stimulate a particular piece of legislation until it is passed, tabled, or voted down as a result of such processes as: partisan caucuses, House or Senate committees hearings and deliberations about the legislation, floor votes by the entire House or Senate, and conference committees trying to reconcile political differences.

Some observers would say the crafting of public policy assumes the art of compromise. It also assumes that political activism by special interest groups – consumers, professionals, others – ordinarily makes a difference in who is affected by the policy and how. It is into this process that you as an advocate, for or against or for modification of a public policy, brings your insights as a statesperson for your field into

the debate about a particular impending policy. Frequently, at the federal level this is done through your testimony at a congressional committee hearing or sometimes in meetings with individual policy-makers or their staff members. Sometimes policy-makers or congressional committees issue requests for prepared papers that outline the issues related to a pending policy or there are opportunities to prepare papers to recommend policy actions. Sometimes the advocate, the statesperson, must address the assumptions of the policy, sometimes the specific goals, sometimes how the policy will affect the future of a particular population to be served. In this context much statespersonship is needed from theorists, researchers, and practitioners of career development to help policy makers understand the growth and potential, the dynamics of change, inherent in the practices, the interventions, available to assist individuals with their career development and, more precisely, how the inclusion of career services will be helpful in reaching the goals specified in the public policy at issue.

Public policy and the legislation that flows from it rarely identifies career development, career counseling or related interventions as the sole purpose of the public policy. Rather, in most cases, career counseling/career development are seen as part of a package of program elements created to solve the problems which gave rise to initiating consideration of the particular public policy. Thus, in one's role as an advocate of public policy for career interventions, or career development, one needs to know how these processes might be linked with other elements of a program of interventions being considered to address some form of need (e.g. unemployment, reintegration of veterans into the work force, training for legal immigrants, career readiness for high school

students) that might include financial incentives, short term job training, job shadowing, internships, career counseling, etc.

As any potential form of public policy is examined and debated, it is clear that public policies create realities. Policy makes a difference in the shape and substance of career development, who does it, for what reasons, the credentials and training one needs to practice career interventions in behalf of particular client groups, who receives the career interventions, and the likely outcomes of specific career interventions. In fact, public policy can move a system such as career counseling or career development from the center to the periphery of national or state policy or the reverse. Public policy and legislation are important influences on the acceptance and the support that government agencies give to providing career services as reflected in the language used in legislation, the criteria by which it grants money, and for what purposes.

Legislation can be limiting or freeing. Advocacy can be helpful in working with policy-makers to ensure that public policies are timely, clear, and inclusive of contributions that professionals in career development can make to the goals of specific public policies, the needs for funding resources to support career development services, and the conditions by which such career interventions will be funded and held accountable.

Policy-makers are not counselors, or career development specialists; thus, they need our perspectives on legislation that addresses career issues. Currently, in the United States the policies concerning career counseling/career development are something of an uncoordinated mosaic; while there continue to be very important pieces of legislation of major importance to career development (e.g. the Workforce Investment Act of 1998; the



Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006), many other important pieces of legislation dealing with career issues have been allowed to terminate. Currently, in the United States there is no single policy direction in career development in the federal or state governments. Although there is a wide range of legislative initiatives available, in many cases they are created independent of other legislation in place or in process. In general, legislation is focused on special problems, specific agencies, or specific populations rather than serve as manifestations of a coherent, comprehensive, life cycle policy designed to insure that all persons with career problems across the life span can get access to help with their career development; whatever the state, institution, or geographic location they occupy.

While the federal and the state governments have repeatedly produced important policy, legislation, and funding support on behalf of career counseling and career guidance services in schools, and in other venues, states and local communities sometimes avoid accepting such federal funds or are unable to match the funds required to receive funds from a specific piece of legislation. Thus, by circumstances or by choice, these entities avoid the implementation of the policies and recommendations for practice that such funds promote and support. Therefore, the resources, availability of practitioners, and purposes of career counseling and career guidance can vary for students and adults depending upon where they live, work or go to school. Some students and adults can be considered to be very disadvantaged by a virtually complete lack of access to career guidance services, while students and adults in other locations have a comprehensive set of opportunities for such help in schools, in their community, and in agencies providing career services funded by state and federal funds.

Concern about policy coherence in career services is often viewed in terms of the implementation of policy at the federal level (Herr and Pinson, 1982), although there are parallels in many state governments. In the United States, national policy, legislation, and funding are highly interactive. Policy directly spawns and gives rationale to specific legislative enactments and to the authorization of funding for specific purposes articulated in policy. However, there are many separate power centers that affect the content of legislation that is ultimately passed. Federal Departments (e.g., Education, Labor, Health and Human Services, Defense, etc.) are particularly important in recommending and shaping legislation as it moves through the political process of deliberation. Each of these departments tends to have its own constituencies and the ability independently to recommend policies and levels of funding to the Congress for conversion into legislation. Virtually all federal departments (e.g. Education, Labor, Health and Human Services, Defense, etc.), and there are parallels in some state departments, have some entitlement to support career counseling and guidance for children, youth, or adults or some specific subset of the population: those economically disadvantaged, Native Americans, the elderly, migrant workers, the physically and mentally disabled, military veterans, ex-offenders, displaced homemakers, the unemployed, substance abusers, etc. Consequently, as separate policies and pieces of legislation originate in different governmental departments and sponsors are found to introduce relevant legislation, the resulting legislation is a product of negotiation, compromise and agreement by the federal and state departments or by agencies that will be affected by the particular legislation. Thus, coalition building, like compromise, becomes a major element of the legislative process.

Given such conditions, there is at present no specific location in the federal government from which policy-makers or career professionals can obtain a global view of the needs for career development or career interventions at national, state, local, or individual levels. It needs to be noted, however, that, like so many other topics, the Internet has much important information about Congressional Committees, their purposes, their membership, and their chairs. The Internet also has excellent government websites that provide current information on the status of legislation in career development. There is also important information on pending or approved legislation and the committees that are deliberating about specific public policies or legislation. Even so, the argument can be made that without a comprehensive and coherent national policy about the need for and characteristics of career counseling, guidance, or other interventions, such services continue to be vulnerable to social and political exigencies and to the possibility that resources for such services will be diluted through fragmentation and lack of co-ordination.

Before I leave the importance of public policy in career development I want to note briefly some other relevant concepts. For example, regardless of whether or not the public policy and legislation in which career counseling/career development is identified and supported is as robust or coherent as would be desirable, the fact is that career development, and career interventions in their many manifestations, are basically creatures of public policy. “Almost from its birth in the late nineteenth century, the iterations of career counseling and other career interventions (e.g. vocational guidance, occupational or employment counseling, vocational counseling, career guidance) have been the subject of public policy and frequently of legislation that has mandated inclusion

of career counseling as one of several interventions intended to address particular national economic, political, and workforce issues. As such, in the past one hundred years, career counseling, its antecedents, and related interventions have become an integral part of national labor market policies in such areas as the following: (1) the prevention or reduction of long-term unemployment, the development of an effective workforce, and the matching of workers and employers; (2) the adjustment by employed workers to rapidly changing labor market conditions, including the pervasive use of advanced technology in the workplace or the transfer of jobs within the United States or from the United States to other nations, requiring workers in the affected industries to migrate to where the jobs are or to be retrained for other opportunities; (3) the provision of assistance to persons considered marginally employable because of poor skills, functional disabilities, social problems, or work requirements with which they cannot cope without significant help, and (4) in many pieces of legislation, there is embedded a concern for developing a workforce which has not only current occupation-specific skills, but also personal commitment to work, positive self concepts as effective workers, and employability skills, including skills in searching for work and in adjusting to a new job. Which of these labor policies is dominant at a given time changes as the social, economic, and political context changes to reflect major national issues (e.g. poverty, national defense, needs for training workers to use advanced technology, the transformation from an industrial to an information based economy, global competition, etc.)

From such a perspective contemporary, career services in the United States (whether defined as career guidance, career counseling, career education, employment

counseling, career interventions, or the practice of career development), are socio-political processes. For the most part, they have been put in place or enabled by some forms of governmental policy, statute, or legislative enactment that defines what services are to be provided, by whom, to whom, and for what purposes.

At one level, federal legislation has explicitly directed the establishment and implementation of specific career services. As examples, the Wagner-Peyser Act (in 1933) established the U.S. Employment service to provide vocational counseling for persons with work adjustment problems, difficulty in finding work, or with disabilities; the Veterans Administration Vocational Rehabilitation and Education Service (in 1951) provided career services for veterans; the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act (1985) and its antecedents in the Vocational Education Act (1963) have, through much of their history provided the largest source of funding for career guidance in schools. The National Defense Education Act of 1958 was the major impetus to placing counselors in secondary schools, elementary schools, and to a lesser extent, technical institutes and community colleges. The principal purpose expected of the preparation of and the placement of school counselors was to identify and encourage able students to major in mathematics and science, so the United States could compete with the Soviets in the space race in the late 1950s and through the middle of the 1960s. In addition, school counselors were also to implement a little known provision in the NDEA legislation that the school counselors trained and placed in schools were to provide career development and career counseling for students.

There have been many reasons for advocating the inclusion of career services in public policy and legislation: one of them is the assumption that the availability of career

services will help reduce social costs (e.g. lost wages, lost taxes, social disruption) that need to be reduced or alleviated. Closely associated with this assumption is that the governmental provision of career services will pay for itself by helping clients obtain better jobs, better salaries, return higher taxes, etc. It is assumed that these outcomes will in turn provide excellent returns on the federal or state investments in career services. Testing of these assumptions by governments are rare. But I do believe that empirical cost benefit analyses in different settings are increasingly likely to be expected by policy-makers, and advocates for our field will need to be able to address such issues.

### Personal Testimony

Although there is much more to say about specific pieces of legislation, to make my comments reality-based, I have been asked to tell you some stories about my own testifying in Congress. As I was preparing these comments about such experiences, I was reminded of the funny parts as well as the less funny parts, but together they illustrate some of the issues that are implicit in providing advocacy for career development in whatever setting you are engaged. I will give you only a few brief examples.

One of my early testimonies in Congress was on behalf of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and especially Title III, Part D. This title was the part of the Act that focused on research and innovative initiatives in schooling. Title III, Part D of this act was one of the legislative initiatives that gave rise to the creation of Career Education, that subsequently was funded by vocational education legislation, and then was funded by the Career Education Incentive Act, which had a five year life under a sunset provision.

Anyway, on this particular day, I came to testify on ESEA III at the Rayburn building and found myself alone at a table under a beautiful chandelier in a large hearing room. The committee members of the Congress sat in several tiers in front of me and higher. The chairman of the committee, who shall remain nameless, wore a white suit, had a waxed mustache, and had earlier in his life been a Shakespearean Actor. I made my presentation and then the chairman spoke to me as follows: "Professor, I crewed at Harvard and I crewed at Oxford and sometimes the Coxswain says let her drift." The "coxswain" was, of course, the President of the United States whose administration had publicly indicated they were not going to add new funds for education or research. I thanked the chairman and proceeded to elaborate my presentation. He again told me that he had "crewed at Harvard" and "he crewed at Oxford" and the coxswain said let her drift." Finally, I pulled some notes from my pocket and said, "Thank You, Mr. Chairman, but let me remind you of what the school districts which you represent will lose in dollars and in educational benefits for children if the additional requests for this title are not provided." The hearing room got very quiet and the chairman left his Shakespearean persona and aimed a well known expletive at me that had something to do with sticking my head where the sun doesn't shine, although he was kind enough to say professor first. After I figuratively picked myself off the floor, I looked for the nearest exit and how to quickly depart the scene. As it turned out we did get much of the money we had asked for but in a somewhat different form (grants) than we had asked for (research). But, this early experience in providing testimony in congress illustrated to me that it is best not to push your (research) message or to give it in segments. Instead, prepare your oral testimony completely and concisely and let your written testimony augment your oral testimony.

In many other instances I testified before Rep. Carl Perkins of Kentucky who had sponsored many important bills and different iterations of what is now known as the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement of 2006 Act, which has historically included major funds to support career guidance and career counseling in the bill. Indeed, the Carl Perkins Act has for some 20 or so years provided the largest amount of funding for career guidance in the schools of any legislative initiative. Rep. Perkins was a Democrat, his committee co-chair for many years was a Republican, Rep. Goodling from PA, who himself had been a school counselor, high school principal, and superintendent of schools before entering Congress. Reps Perkins and Goodling were co-chairs of the major House Committee that dealt with issues related to work, career interventions and related issues. That very important committee is currently known as the committee on Education and Labor. I was privileged to testify often before Rep. Perkins and Rep. Goodling, both or either one, and less frequently before the Senate HELP committee.

Rep. Perkins and Goodling really admired each other. Both were bright, and wanted to understand and to provide support for career development, particularly in its role of helping persons make wise choices among education and work options. Reps. Perkins and Goodling were also very interested in several other topics related to the development of human capital, educational and social equity, quality instructional programs in vocational education, and career guidance for school children and adults including those incarcerated, disabled, and economically disadvantaged.

There were also some interesting sidebars when I gave testimony before their committee. One had to do with one of the Senate committee staffers that had been



negotiating with Rep. Perkins' staff to change some parts of the bill. We had recently finished testimony on one of the iterations of the Carl Perkins Act of the time. The Senate staff member called me at home and said "Ed, is there anything you would still like to see in this bill." I said yes, one of the major points I had testified about, had not yet been incorporated into the revision of the bill. It turned out that although the bill had a large amount of money for career guidance, those funds were going to vocational educators to use. I said these funds should be going to certified school counselors. The next day, that phrase was in the legislation and remained for several years until some folks finally got the phrase removed from the legislation. The moral is learn who the staff members are who serve as support to the committees before which you are testifying. They are highly influential in summarizing the testimony you give to the congressional committee on which they serve and to advocating its major points to the chairperson or committee members.

Another matter of interest in testifying before Rep. Perkins was the fact that, unlike all of the people one sees on television at a congressional hearing, that is not always what happens in reality. Indeed, I testified before Rep. Perkins on more than one occasion when he was the only Congressperson there to hear the testimony and to make the hearing official, so the testimony could be printed in the Congressional Record or the huge volumes in which all of the testimony and the proceedings of hearings is reported. At any rate, he had a marvelous ability to get a hearing started and then he would glaze over while I or others were testifying and I am sure he was thinking about other things that he had to do.

As you can imagine, every time I testified in such a Congressional Hearing I was really nervous because I wanted to do a good job for the field. Thus, I was really psyched up as if I was going to play a football game. The funny part of this one is that while Rep. Perkins was glazed over members of Rep. Perkins committee would come out of the side doors of the hearing room, join Rep. Perkins for a few minutes, carry a coffee cup, and Rep. Perkins would extol their wonderful and important work, etc. When this happened during a hearing, he would immediately say to me, "Professor Herr, we are off the record." On one occasion, when I was coordinating the ACA testimony for Rep. Perkins committee, such interruptions happened 5 or 6 times during the 2 hour testimony. My nerves were about shot when we finally finished. The back story of the representatives showing up for a few minutes and then leaving allowed them to get their pictures taken with some constituent from their home town and as long as they showed up briefly, they would be marked as present for the hearing and so reported in the Congressional Record. This episode, however, proved to me that in giving testimony, it is critical to have a written statement for congressional staffers to refer to and analyze as the legislation is being deliberated. If not, with all of the interruptions one's oral testimony could be fragmented.

On another occasion, AACD (pre ACA) had submitted a bill that would provide a lot of money over a period of five years and indeed an office for leadership for career guidance and counseling in the federal government. I was asked to chair the testimony and we had two hours to fill with people who would testify. In this case, we were pretty sure that we would not get the bill passed although we had some prominent legislators who had introduced the bill. In particular, we had in the proposed bill a large list of terms,

vocabulary, that we wanted to get in the Congressional Record as a way of bringing the theory and perspectives of career development and related topics into a hearing so that this vocabulary could represent a frame of reference in subsequent legislative initiatives dealing with career development. We were correct, we did not get the bill passed but we did get our testimony into the Congressional Record and that gave us a basis for subsequent discussion and for clarifying terms that were important to professional perspectives on career development or career interventions.

To be brief, I chaired another two hour testimony in behalf of a bill on career guidance and an office for leadership in career guidance and counseling in the federal government. Participating in that hearing was meaningful to me for several other reasons. One issue it reinforced for me is the sanctity of time allotments to speakers involved in giving testimony. As you may have seen on television there are usually three lights, “red, yellow, and green” that are on the speaker’s table or before the chairperson, or at the places where each Congressperson sits during the hearing. Ordinarily, the Chair will indicate how much time each speaker has. When the green light goes on you speak; when the yellow light goes on, you need to finish up your testimony; when the red light goes on you stop, whether or not you are finished. This short and precious time means you must be prepared to speak succinctly and directly to the issues in the hearing and you can not afford to waste time, yours or the members of Congress or their staffers who are there to hear you. At this hearing and at others, I have heard very prominent people in our field be reprimanded by the committee chairperson for not being prepared, not knowing and presenting effectively their testimony, for voicing their opinion without any substantive content to support their arguments, and not respecting the time allocated to them. Such

feedback from a chairperson is embarrassing to the individual reprimanded, but it also taints the view of the organization that sponsored the people giving testimony.

Since I am running out of time here, let me cite only one or two other events that you might enjoy but which reinforce a couple of points I made previously. On one occasion, I was testifying on the Higher Education Act Amendments in which we were advocating for the expansion of career services to help college students use their financial aid money purposefully and to explore their career paths as effectively as possible. The funny side of this one was that as I got to the Rayburn building that day, there were news people, photographers, staffers, security people scurrying around frantically. I thought, “geez, I didn’t know our hearing was that important.” I was really getting worried about how we were going to be received and whether we were ready for prime time on television. As it turned out, all the people scurrying around were attending a hearing in the room next to the one in which we were testifying and in which the very controversial James Watts, the Secretary of the Interior at the time, was testifying. He always drew an audience and it finally came clear to me that we weren’t the people everyone wanted to hear and put on T.V. that evening. Instead, the hearing that I was in had probably at most 15 or 20 spectators, the three of us who were testifying, and a staff member who was chairing the hearing instead of the Congressperson he represented who called the meeting.

There are many ways you can embarrass yourself as an advocate for public policy if you do not follow the instructions given to you or address the specific request made to you. One case for me which ultimately turned out ok was when I served as the State Director of Guidance and Testing for Pennsylvania. In that position I had to manage the

federal funds that came to my department, the Bureau of Guidance Services, from federal legislation. In that role, I frequently was asked to testify on work or career development before committees of the State Legislature or in Washington on federal legislation as seen from the state perspective. In this context, my boss, the Secretary of Education called me on the phone one day and said I want you to write me a paragraph on the Manpower Problem in Pennsylvania. Presumably a staffer in the Governor's office asked him about this issue, as part of a public policy on cooperation between government agencies that several of us were working on. At any rate, rather than listening carefully to what he wanted, I wrote the Secretary an 18 page paper on "The Manpower Problem in Pennsylvania" and sent it to his office. As you can imagine in a very short time, my phone rang again and the Secretary said, "What did I ask you for Herr?" I said a paragraph on the Manpower Problem in Pennsylvania. He said, "What did you give me?" I said, an 18 page paper. Said he, can you just give me a paragraph? Yes sir said I! I then gave him a 3 page paper. My phone rang again? It was the Secretary. He started the conversation by saying "Herr, where in the H did you get your doctorate? Do you know what a paragraph is?" I finally gave him a paragraph! The funny part of this episode occurred about a year later. I was just about ready to go on stage to give a major speech in Pittsburgh; standing backstage with me was a Special Assistant to the Governor of Pennsylvania. He said to me I hope we are not giving the same speech tonight. I was surprised at his comment and replied, "Why would we be giving the same speech?" He pulled out my original 18 page paper. He said "didn't you write this?" I acknowledged that I had. He said the Governor gave me this paper and said to use it as my speech tonight. As it turned out, I was not using the paper, I had pretty much forgotten about it,

but apparently, my boss, the Secretary sent the original paper to the Governor without ever telling me – particularly while he was trying to get a paragraph from me. As an aside, even though I periodically messed up, the Secretary of Education was the best administrator I ever worked for. The message is again when you are advocating to policy-makers, make sure you listen carefully to what they are asking for and comply, rather than marching to your own “drum beat.”

### Do's and Don'ts in Advocacy

If we had time we could talk about some other legislation or public policy in which I participated that also was challenging, interesting, and sometimes funny. However, I think this is sufficient to help us end my remarks with some thoughts on some brief do's and don'ts related to advocacy of career development.

1. Perhaps the major point to be made here is that whether you are nervous, scared, anxious, feeling inadequate, the persons, Congresspersons, state legislators or others see you as a statesperson for your field. You are seen as the expert on career development and career interventions in the room at this point in time. Depending upon what you are specifically testifying about, your responsibility is to represent the perspectives of NCDA, the pertinent body of research, the evidence available about the positive effects of career interventions related to the goals of this particular legislation. Of particular import is informing the legislators or policy-makers of the added value that strengthening the inclusion of career development, career counseling, or career interventions in the bill will provide. In such a context, you are not only an advocate for career development, you are an advisor to these policy-makers about how to make this piece of legislation the very best that it can

be, and an educator about the successes of career development programs or services in addressing the types of problems or dilemmas that the persons experience for whom this piece of legislation is being prepared.

In something of an aside, in the late 1980s several of us in ACA, were working to get counselors licensure status (e.g. Licensed Professional Counselors) in each of the States so that they would be considered mental health professionals eligible for federal authorization to receive funding for counseling military personnel and their dependents and eligible for third party payment (from insurance companies) to reimburse counselors assisting clients in independent practice. To demonstrate the importance of counselors, I prepared two different monographs, both entitled *Why Counseling?* And published by ACA. These monographs included summaries of research studies of counseling interventions and their successful outcomes with particular populations who had problems similar to those being addressed in the legislation being advocated. A number of these references had general counseling content and, of course, career themes as well, that we assumed would be attractive to the reader of the monographs. These monographs were not as sophisticated as the body of research that now exists would provide, but at the time we gave these monographs to legislators on the committees we were testifying before and their staff members.

I do not mean to suggest that you should prepare monographs each time you testify, but you can be creative in the presentation you make. We actually received a number of positive comments about these monographs and their contents from state law-makers and congresspersons. While perhaps somewhat primitive, they illustrated that we were testifying in a substantive way and addressing the results they were trying to achieve

with the legislation they proposed. We were not testifying from our opinions or begging for money. We were there to help policy-makers get the results they were trying to achieve; we were not their adversaries, we were there to represent content that we felt was important in their deliberations. We were trying to be statespersons who were concerned with their getting the best return for their investment, greater services for their constituents, and services that were consistent with the competencies of professional counselors.

2. Many of the important persons who testify or provide information for policy makers or their staff members on career issues, work in professional organizations, school districts, universities or corporate settings that have government relations committees, lobbyists, or other specialists. These persons typically monitor emerging legislation, often analyze the legislation, highlight disagreements with it, and get to know the staff members and policy-makers concerned with particular topics. I strongly recommend that you get to know these people in your organization or in the professional organizations (e.g. NCDA, ACA) to which you belong. They are there to help you. They may request you to testify on a career related topic or if you are testifying in behalf of a particular organization, etc., they will brief you on impending legislation and help you pull your presentation together. They will make specific contacts for you in government offices to learn more about a particular issue, they may be contacted by a staff member of a particular policy-maker to recommend some one like you who can give a presentation on a particular subject or provide testimony. Get to know them and learn from their experiences. Rarely are



you an advocate or a testifier alone. Usually, these critical activities involve several persons helping to prepare and rehearse what will be said.

3. As an advocate, a spokesperson, a person giving testimony, a statesperson, remember that you are not testifying to make enemies. You want to be seen as a professional who is serious about your contribution to the policy or legislative goals being considered. If policy-makers and their staff trust you and value your presentation, in the future they are likely to seek your advice on the early formulation of policy or legislation. You may be asked to comment on a position paper or to write a brief statement of your organization's views about a particular subject and it is likely that you will be invited to testify or comment on policy and legislation in the future. It is important to realize that you may testify about a disagreement with the proposed legislation, or because the proposals and funding in the legislation differ from those preferred interventions or best practices in the profession. Rather than being argumentative, use this opportunity to educate the policy makers and their staff about career development and career interventions. If you or the organization you represent disagrees with a provision in the proposed legislation and you hope to have it removed, be prepared with an alternative and explanation of why it is important. It is always valuable, as you prepare for a hearing or develop your testimony, to learn as much as you can about the criticisms or the strengths of the bill that have already been made in other testimony, in the newspaper or elsewhere. If there is a question and answer period following your testimony, policy-makers or their staff may ask you if you know about and concur with support for or criticisms of the bill that are already on the record. Your

knowledge of these perspectives and your responses to them suggest that you are serious about your responses to the bill and that you are trying to learn all you can about the bills' likely impact on particular career problems and how you can strengthen such impact.

4. Again, you are not testifying to “wing it”, to simply give your opinion. To be credible you must be informed on the subject you are testifying about and present what you have to say as succinctly and logically as you can. Particularly, if there is a question and answer period after you or all the presenters finish, you need to know the history of the evolution of career development as a professional specialty, its trends, its evolution from philosophy to theory to research studies to evidence-based (or best practice) interventions. In short, be prepared; know what you are talking about and present your material in such a way that those who hear you know that you are prepared.
5. In my view, one of the most important roles of a professional engaged in advocacy or the delivery of testimony to government committees or to individual policy makers is to get to know the staff members who support the committees or who work out of a particular policy-makers' office. Policy-makers and legislators are typically very busy, serving on several committees, attending hearings, participating in caucuses and votes, and serving in many other roles. As a result, they often do not have time to read your full testimony. Often that is the job of a staff member. The staff member analyzes the material, summarizes it, and typically makes a recommendation to the policy maker about how he or she should vote on a particular piece of legislation and its recommendations. As I suggested earlier, whenever you

testify, make sure to leave a written statement of your testimony for the policy-maker or staff member to read and digest after a hearing is over. The advantage is that you can give a fuller statement in a written form than is possible in a 5 or 10 minute oral statement.

6. Before you actually testify to a congressional or state committee or some other body of policy-makers you will likely be given some instructions about the time you have to speak and related protocol issues. While I have already addressed this point let me reinforce it. Failure to only speak for the time you have been given can be very embarrassing for you and it may taint the view of the organization you represent.
7. Although I have talked primarily about testifying at the federal level, most of what I have said is pertinent to state and local levels. Many of the federal policies that are currently being debated in Washington, D.C. may also be debated in your town, in part because many pieces of legislation direct funds to local agencies to deliver services that are national concerns but require delivery of career services at the local level. You may want to attend such meetings and take the opportunity to practice testifying about the bill or bills local authorities are discussing. Many towns have Public Forums on different social, economic, or political issues. These, too, represent an opportunity for you to participate, to learn about the vocabulary and processes used, and perhaps prepare a paper about the topics underway in a forum. Read the newspaper to develop in your mind issues that relate to employment or unemployment, to immigration, to the nature of elementary and secondary education, to the status of training opportunities in your town. Each of these issues and many others are directly related to career development. The more you read about

them and participate in discussions about them, the more you will develop a repertoire of topics about which you can speak authoritatively; you will increasingly develop your ability to speak out and provide recommendations about substantive issues that you see in the policies or legislation being discussed at home. Try to discern the motivation for the advocates and for the adversaries relative to a particular issue. Think about how coalitions are built in community groups and their importance in focusing agreement or disagreement on a particular topic for policy makers. It is important for you to acknowledge that testifying, preparing a written statement, joining with others in coalition building are the elements of what goes on at state and federal government. Getting involved at the local level is essentially a mini-effort that emulates what takes place in advocacy or statespersonship at the national level. It is a very good training ground to sharpen your advocacy skills.

#### In Conclusion

I have appreciated your interest in these remarks about advocacy for career development in public policy. There are many issues in the advocacy of public policy that will be presented and discussed in this Conference in the days ahead. My presentation is just one view among the many others that will be put forward. If more time were available this afternoon, I would have spent more time on coalition building or discussed some topics that require advocacy even though they are not now in impending legislation. Such topics would be the need in public policy for a life cycle approach to public policy in career development that essentially would be reflected in the development and maintenance of a matrix of all legislation that includes a career emphasis or career component, across the lifespan, across population groups, the

resources provided in each piece of legislation to support career services, the specific recipients of these resources and the accountability of career agencies for these legislative provisions. The result of such a matrix would be the ability to check for any voids in providing access to career services for specific populations, persons with specific career problems, or other demographic groups. Such a matrix could be used to monitor existing legislation and that which is terminated or modified because of sunset provisions or other factors. The availability of a life cycle approach to public policy in legislation could also diminish the fragmentation and unevenness in availability for some populations, in some settings, and geographic areas.

Advocacy and statespersonship could also be devoted to a better understanding of cost benefit analysis, and to such possibilities as career development task forces in each town or city. Among other things, such task forces would coordinate all of the career development assets available in that location, so that career counselors would not be restricted to functioning in one setting but could work with counselors across settings to increase the capacity for career development services. I am sure you will hear this week of many other topics for which advocacy could be valuable.

There is no doubt in my mind that each of you can serve as a statesperson, an advocate, for positive public policies that can increase the availability of career development programs and services that can make contributions to the purposefulness, productivity, effectiveness and satisfaction with which people choose, create, and reconstruct their career paths and by which they will find increased meaning, mental health, and success in their work life.

Thanks for your kind attention. Have a great conference.

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