The reports in this volume are excerpted from the material required of each student team in “Advocacy for Policy Change” (Legal Studies 161b) in Spring 2015. The assignments were designed to develop and demonstrate the students’ understanding of the issues and the advocacy process.

Required Project Components

Storybook
One of the most crucial components of the advocacy process is the sharing of personal stories. For this assignment, students were directed to connect with individuals impacted by their issues and collect and recount their stories.

Research Report
The legislative research report is an in-depth document containing facts and analysis of the bill or budget item that a legislator or staffer can reference during the legislative process.

Elevator Speech
A prepared advocate should be able to give someone a general idea of the issue and a plan of action within about 30 seconds – the time it takes to ride an elevator. Students were instructed to imagine riding an elevator or walking a hallway at the State House with a legislator or aide.

Letter to the Legislator
Ten handwritten [or typed] letters to a legislator have more impact on him or her than 100 emails. The main purposes of this letter to the legislator are to convey that constituents are watching his or her actions on an issue, and to recommend a legislative course of action.

Script for an In-Depth Meeting with House Ways and Means Staff
All bills pass through the House Ways and Means Committee for an analysis of their impact on the state budget. For this assignment, students were to write up an accessible and personalized speech to be given in a 5-10 minute meeting with the chair of the House Ways and Means Committee.

Campaign Journal
The campaign journal was an opportunity for students to reflect upon at least two substantive meetings with coalition organizations or policymakers.

Op-Ed
The op-ed section of The Boston Globe presents a wide array of opinions from community members. Students wrote their own op-ed pieces, sharing their opinions on their advocacy issues in 750 words or less.

Advocacy Video
Using either original footage or existing YouTube films, students created “media mash-ups” to present their issues through video.

Final Oral Presentation: “Present and Defend”
Bringing everything together, on April 28th, 2015, students gave brief oral presentations of their legislative advocacy projects and responded to questions from audience members.