

Case Study

Designing a Multi-State Advocacy Coalition for a Fortune 500 Company

Several years ago, a Fortune 500 company came to MultiState facing a complex tax issue across multiple states. Their industry was subject to onerous state and local tax systems in states across the country, systems that required hundreds of compliance hours and hundreds of thousands of dollars of employee time — often which outweighed the amount of tax revenue collected. The client sought to work with state lawmakers to remedy the problem, and over a few years we secured favorable legislative changes in a majority of states. Despite this success, we continued facing pushback in several key states and were unable to gain the traction we needed with just one single company advocating on the issue.

We knew the key to solving this problem was to demonstrate that this tax issue was one faced by the industry as a whole — not just one company — and was causing negative economic effects for states. We began recruiting members for an industry-wide coalition and tested the waters in a single state. We retained in-state lobbying and legal representation to advance the issue, and quickly identified numerous companies facing the same tax issue and recruited them to the effort.

The Challenge

A national company with a state government affairs staff of one faced costly and complex tax issue in multiple states.

The Outcome

We developed an advocacy coalition in a single state, enacted legislation, and then expanded the coalition to multiple states for an ongoing, multi-year campaign.



How do you know if the coalition model is right for you and your issue?

- **If you need to demonstrate issue breadth.** Showcasing the breadth of the issue beyond a single business or single organization strengthens and amplifies your message, helps you highlight the issue from multiple perspectives to reach and convince more stakeholders, and sends the message that the issue should be a priority for lawmakers.
- **If you want to lend credibility to the cause.** When you can demonstrate broad support for a policy proposal from multiple perspectives, it sends the message that a large group is united behind the issue. It tells policymakers: “this is important to all of us and it should be to you as well.”
- **If you need an organized control center.** A coalition can serve as a way to unify messaging and outreach, making your voice stronger and more likely to be heard and taken seriously. With broad support comes many voices — a good thing! However, unified and coordinated messaging will go a long way and make you more poised for success.
- **If you need to distribute costs.** Pursuing a policy change can be expensive both financially and in terms of time. Spreading the work and the cost can be valuable for everyone involved.



Case Study (cont.)

To give the coalition a public face, MultiState’s communications experts created a custom name, logo, website, and messaging from scratch. A coalition isn’t as strong if it doesn’t have official branding and a professional online presence. A website and social media presence lends credibility to a coalition and its policy solution, as well as facilitating consistent messaging and sharing information with both coalition members and interested external stakeholders.

The coalition amplified the client’s message and reached both a wider and more targeted audience. Because the coalition was industry-wide, we were able to recruit constituent companies in key legislators’ districts, making our letters, calls, and other outreach more meaningful. When our bill was scheduled for hearings or floor votes, we were able to fill the room with local businesses that employed local residents and national companies with a large in-state presence. The coalition’s website served as a way to share communications with our coalition members — such as instructions on how to contact legislators, talking points, and pre-made handouts for legislative meetings. The website gave interested stakeholders somewhere to go to get up-to-date information and helpful resources.

Our efforts were successful. At the end of the 2017 legislative session, our proposed policy was signed into law by the first state’s governor. We used the interim time between the 2017 and 2018 state legislative sessions to expand the coalition to three additional states and by 2019 we had a coalition presence in eight states. By the end of 2019, the issue was resolved in half of these states, with the other half positioned for success in 2020.



M U L T I S T A T E

MultiState is a full-service state and local government relations company. We deliver extraordinary solutions so our clients can act with confidence to achieve their goals. Our team is here every step of the way providing the tools and expertise you need. Do you need to track mission-critical issues? Launch an advocacy campaign? Find the right lobbyist? Streamline your compliance process? We've got you covered. And that's just the start.

Our industry veterans and extensive lobbying network give you access to unparalleled government relations expertise. Our team of deep policy and process experts provide you with insights and analysis you can't get anywhere else. Our savvy problem solvers will develop and execute an advocacy plan to get you across the finish line. If you have a problem, we have a solution.



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