Media Tips for *Strolling Thunder* Participants

Your personal story about you and your children is one of the most powerful the most important things you can share. Here are a few tips that can help you prepare for an interview with the media.

***Tips for Telling Your Story***

* **Be YOU.** Use language you are comfortable with. Talk in your own voice. If you are emotional, that’s ok! These are powerful and important issues.
* **Keep it short (and simple).** Your story doesn’t have to be long and complicated and neither do your sentences. Keep it short, and impactful. For example,
  + Talk about when you first became parent and the challenges you faced—whether it was the need for time off, extra support to meet your child’s needs, or finding quality affordable childcare.
  + Talk about a challenge your child faced and the help you needed to get for you and your child.
  + Share a success or a challenge that may still exist and explain the help you need.
* **Practice**. Practice the exact story you want to tell before you get on the phone with the reporter. Maybe write it down, practice on your phone, or talk to a friend.

***Tips for Working with Reporters***

* Relax. The reporter wants to write a good story. They are interested in you and why you are coming to [CITY/STATE CAPITAL].
* Remember, the reporter can use anything you say in his/her story.
* If you don’t know the answer to a question, that’s ok! Let the reporter know you don’t know the answer and direct them back to [ORGANIZATION]. You do not have to answer any questions you are uncomfortable with.
* If the reporter contacts you directly and you’re not ready to be interviewed, ask them their deadline and if you can return their call. If something comes up and you need to reschedule or call the reporter back, that’s fine. Just be sure you stay in touch so he or she knows when to expect an interview.
* Thank the reporter at the end of the interview! Ask him/her if there is anything else he/she needs.
* When the story runs, feel free to email the reporter and thank him/her again.

***Key Messages***

*Strolling Thunder* is all about telling our policymakers to *Think Babies* for stronger families, vibrant communities, and a prosperous country. Here are a few messages that you can include in your interviews:

* Babies’ brains grow faster between ages 0 to 3 than at any other later point in their lives. This has enormous impact on their future.
* Investing in the brain development of babies is one of the most important things we can do to raise healthy, well-rounded adults. Families like mine want and need supports so we can help lay the foundation for our children’s later learning and success.
* We’re calling on policymakers to [ORGANIZATION TO REVISE BASED ON YOUR POLICY PRIORITIES] to ensure:
  + [ACCESS TO QUALITY, AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE]
  + [TIME FOR PARENTS TO BOND WITH THEIR BABIES]
  + HEALTHY EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT]
  + STRONG PHYSICAL HEALTH AND NUTRITION]