



## NEGOTIATING POLICY WITH INTEGRITY

An integral piece of the policy process is negotiation and - yes - compromise. This can be frustrating and difficult, particularly for communities whose needs have been routinely and historically ignored. It can make it feel like policy is where radical ideas go to die. It does not have to be that way. The CAIP team believes that policy is one of many important tools at our disposal - we just have to know how to use it.

Deciding if and when to negotiate a compromise is a delicate strategic balance, but in the policy process we are often met with the limits of our current power. If you are at the limit of the pressure you are able to exert on an elected official or legislative body, you will arrive at a time to negotiate your wins - and what you must let go for the next fight.

- **Negotiate in the direction of your goals.**
  - Never negotiate at the expense of your ultimate vision; we don't have time to work towards legislation that we'll have to undo in fifty years, even if it is a marginal win now.
  - Required: clarity of vision around your goal and your politics. You can't know whether you're compromising in or away from your ultimate direction if you don't know where you're going.
- **Notice who is bearing the brunt of the compromise.**
  - Over and over, movements are asked to compromise their most marginalized members in order to secure a win for some of us. While this path might be seductive - and even alleviate suffering for some in our communities - we run the risk of further entrenching disparities, and further marginalizing already vulnerable communities. The truth is that it is easier to secure wins that benefit many of us than it is to "go back" to secure wins for communities of people who are routinely maligned and misunderstood. The "going back" to secure these wins rarely happens.
- **Follow the money.**
  - Many legislative efforts - particularly the kinds of investments our communities so desperately need - include appropriations or budget components.
  - Where is the money going? Who is profiting? Is there a contractor or manufacturer who stands to profit mightily? What does that mean for your communities? Does this align with where your values tell you investments should go, or are funds being allocated towards actors who have been hostile to your communities?



## SOME EXAMPLES

In our time doing radical policy work, we've seen many compromises - a few good ones, and many bad ones. Here are two examples of compromises we believe left us worse off.

- **The Hyde Amendment** is a line-item in the yearly federal appropriations bill - that is, the budget - that prohibits any federal funding going towards abortion. What that means practically is that, unless individual states decide to cover this with state funds, low-income people using Medicaid can't use their insurance to cover this piece of their health care.
  - Why it's a bad compromise: When you look at who bears the brunt of Hyde, it is low-income people, who are disproportionately people of color. That is, it is a community that is already quite vulnerable. The Hyde Amendment has now been in place for over forty years, and was largely forgotten by mainstream reproductive rights organizations in the interim. The women of color organizers who have been leading the charge for eliminating it are just over the past decade beginning to see more widespread support for its repeal.
- **Body-worn cameras** were a popular intervention proposed in the wake of the uprisings in Ferguson and New York City in 2014 after the high-profile murders of Mike Brown and Eric Garner at the hands of the police.
  - For abolitionists - those of us who believe that policing as we know it cannot be reformed and a new safety system must emerge - we needed to come up with policy interventions that looked toward that goal knowing that abolition was not in the cards in the near future. We knew that there were ways to intervene now to reduce the harms of policing that were in alignment with those values.
  - As expensive items that stood to add millions to police budgets around the country, we knew right away that body cameras were not a viable solution that was in alignment with a long-term abolitionist vision.
  - We also saw that manufacturers of these cameras stood to profit mightily, and that a push for this as a solution was less about what communities needed and more about what body camera manufacturers stood to gain.
  - Though many of us opposed body worn camera technology (choosing to support only interventions that reduced the size of police department budgets or were budget-neutral), body worn cameras have been widely adopted to mixed effect in police accountability processes.

