Putting it together required four things:

* **Planning-** this is a crucial first step to achieving anything, if you don’t plot a course you never arrive to your destination, sometimes plans change, carrying out your project doesn’t always go as intended so it’s a good idea to anticipate a backup strategy, be flexible.
* **Research-** NO project should be attempted without research. You have to know and understand your issues as well as your audience to achieve the greatest impact, I also learned that confidence goes a long way in carrying out your intentions and research is a great confidence builder when you know what you’re talking about you feel better talking about it.
* **Execution-** professionalism is essential, you must rely on your facts and, as difficult as it is, you must keep your personal feelings and strong disagreements under control so not to dissuade your audience, follow your planning, be confident in your research, and always appear respectful and gracious.
* **Teamwork-** accepting the help of others reduces the weight of the load and decreases the possibility of fatigue or burnout and also brings different views, ideas, and skill sets to the table, so be willing to cooperate and able to delegate.

Things I learned:

* **You’re not alone-** I learned to accept the help of others and benefit from their knowledge, wisdom, and experience, and I learned that it’s ok to use reliable resources that already exist, you don’t have to do it all.
* **Self-care-** I learned that the process can be stressful and it’s ok to disengage sometimes, take a break, enjoy your hobbies, love on your fur-babies and remember that the comfort of friends and sisters is a phone call or email away.
* **Courage-** I learned that legislators aren’t as intimidating as I thought, I found them to be rather approachable and just as human as I am, so don’t be afraid to go out on a limb and face your fears, you just might find them unfounded.
* **Have fun-** I learned that keeping it light reduces exhaustion so it’s ok to not take yourself so serious all the time, and I learned that breaking the ice with humer and a bright face can make your audience more receptive.
* **Self-assurance-** finally and possibly most importantly, of all the things I learned was the realization that **I can do this**!!!