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Describe how social and political influences affect policy. Discuss how in the role of APN, you would leverage your professional expertise to influence the policy-making process. Draw on your experiences and the current climate in your workplace.

Kostas-Polston, E. A., Thanavaro, J., Arvidson, C., & Taub, L.-F. M. (2015). Advanced practice nursing: Shaping health through policy. *Journal of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners*, 27(1), 11–20. <https://doi.org/10.1002/2327-6924.12192>

Liao, C. (2019). Public policy design. In J.A. Milstead & N. M. Short (Eds.). *Health policy and politics: A nurse's guide* (6<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 87-99). Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Policies are a direct representation of public opinion as well as evidence-based data (Liao, 2019). Various social and political factors influence policy; therefore, how the public views certain issues directly influence how policymakers formulate solutions to problems (Liao, 2019). Lobbyists, special interest groups, and other federal and state-level advocates play a major role in how policies are formed (Liao, 2019). Developing policies requires such groups to appoint community members to influence decisions based on how the public views the issue. The Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) offers insight concerning clinical practice area concerns directly affecting the policy-making process (Liao, 2019).

The APN is a representable healthcare figure offering various ways to influence policy. APNs are graduate-prepared clinicians strategically positioned to lead the way in implementing health policy; therefore, political engagement is an essential APN role (Kostas-Polston et al., 2015). Kostas-Polston et al. (2015) described that political competence is the first step in political decision-making while utilizing clinical expertise to guide decision-making. Therefore, the APN can influence policy in several ways, including communicating with local legislators on pertinent issues, joining professional nursing organizations such as the American Nurses Association (ANA), serving on advisory boards, speaking publicly, and developing strong partnerships. In addition, the APN can become politically engaged by focusing on policy issues directly affecting their current practice promoting optimal patient health (Kostas-Polston et al., 2015).

As an intensive care unit (ICU) nurse, the current workplace climate is dramatically affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, the nursing workload in the ICU is a pertinent topic among administrators. The Alabama governor recently declared a state of emergency, declaring a temporary bill that ICU nurses increase nurse-patient ratios due to a shortage of ICU beds. The temporary bill is one example of how political opinion can influence current practice and policy. Contributing to the policy-making process, the transitioning RN to APN observes social and political policy influences and leverages professional expertise in relevant policy decision-making.