

# Legislative Simulacrum: Co-designing AI-powered virtual lawmaker simulations to train community advocates for public health advocacy

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## Background

Community advocacy critically influences public policy; however, community advocates face:

- Limited time and resources
- Uncertainty about legislative procedures
- Lack of insight into idiosyncratic behavior of lawmakers, such as difficulty anticipating lawmakers' priorities and communication style



## Objective

Co-develop an interactive training tool that lets community advocates practice legislative conversations with simulated lawmakers, preparing them for real-world advocacy.

## Methodology

- Tracked and performed needs assessment through contextual inquiry with advocacy groups over a period of 2 months.
- Integrated advocates' feedback into systems design.
- Built a working prototype on AWS EC2 (nginx server with Svelte frontend and Python frontend) to ensure secure, scalable use.

## Results

**Legislative Simulacrum**  
Fill out the form to start interacting with virtual lawmakers.

What is your name?  
John Doe

What is your email?  
johndoe@gmail.com

What organization are you part of?  
Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders

What is the policy topic you are discussing with the lawmaker?  
Out of Kids' Hands campaign

- 1 User forms capture demographic details and policy topic for context

**Legislative Simulacrum**  
Empower community advocates in legislative advocacy through safe and mock simulations with lawmaker deliberation calls.

About Features Contact

Thanks for using Legislative Simulacrum!

Get your feedback.

- 3 Exit page for end of meeting

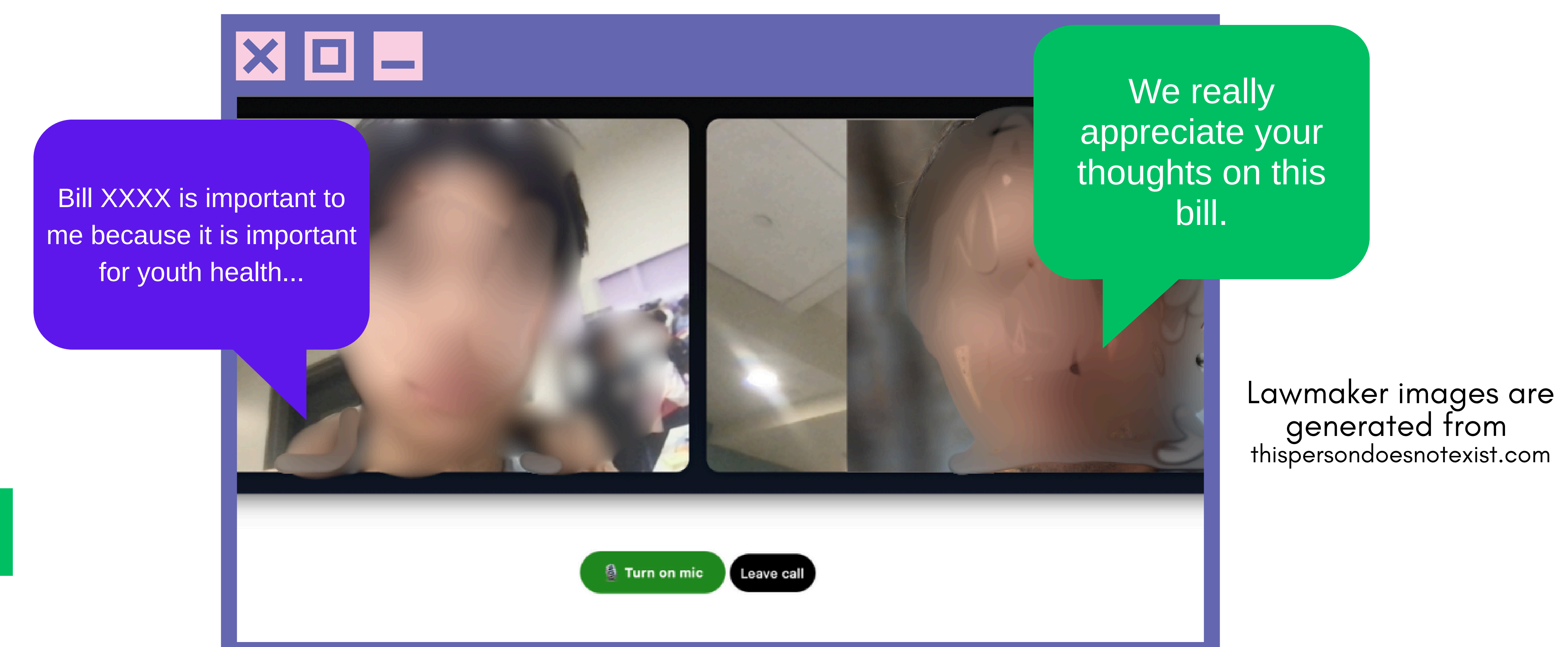
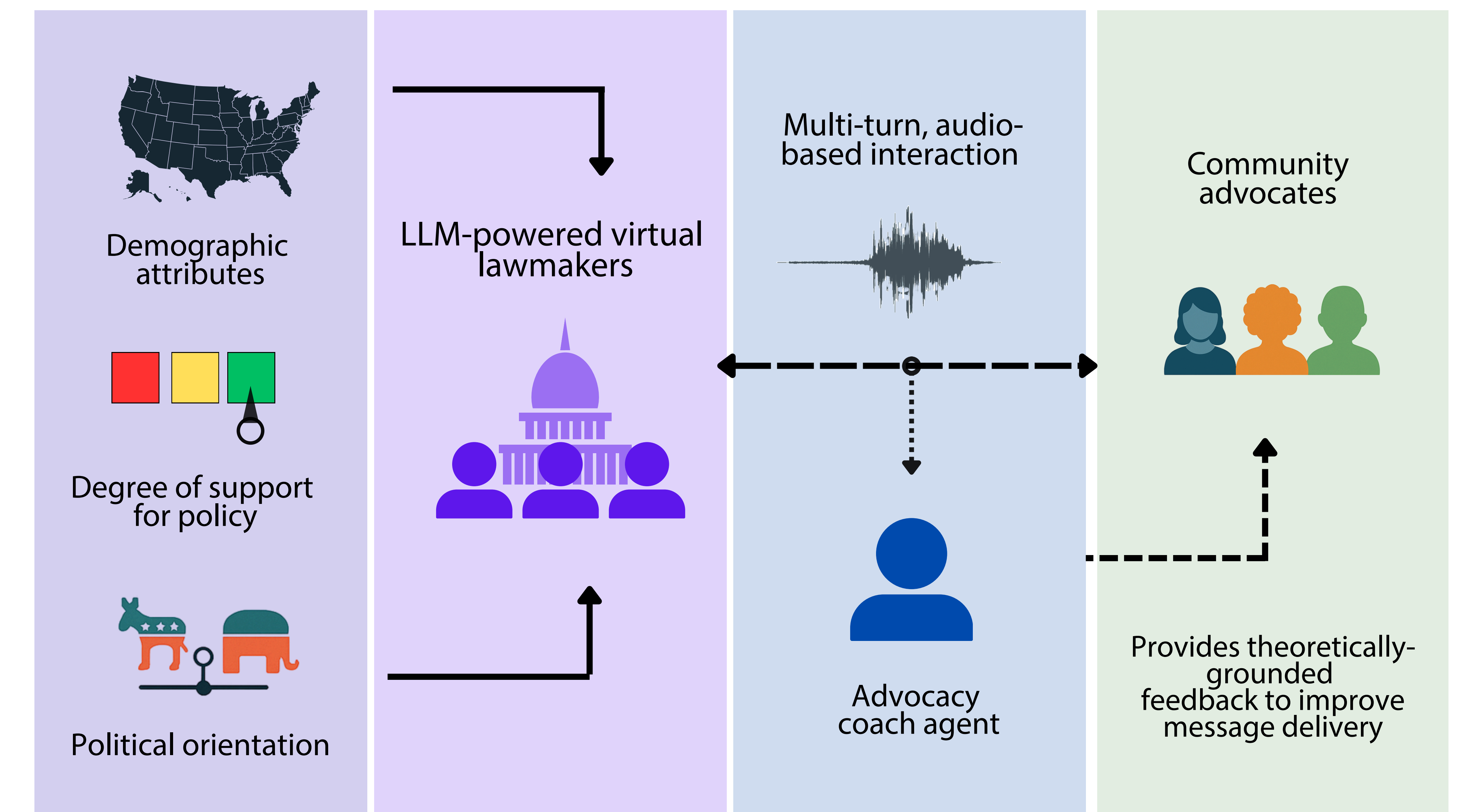
Thank you — I've read the exchange. Below I'll (1) quickly synthesize the conversation flow, (2) highlight what went well, (3) give constructive feedback and specific language you can use next time, and (4) offer a concrete, actionable ask and follow-up plan you can take to Representative Doe.

1) Quick synthesis of the conversation  
- Stanley opened warmly, introduced himself and the Green Collective, and framed the issue around planting trees at schools and playgrounds.  
- Representative Doe responded positively, affirmed the benefits, then asked two focused questions: species selection (native/drought-tolerant) and long-term maintenance/costs. She invited examples of successes or problems and asked how the effort can be made sustainable.

2) Key strengths and why they matter  
- The work in children's wellbeing — that's salient for legislators and  
- Her questions show the two main barriers she's thinking about —

- 4 Feedback reports highlight actionable insights, grounded in risk communication strategies

## System Design



- 2 Prototype interface allows for real-time conversations with virtual persona-generated lawmakers powered by GPT-4o.

## Conclusion

Our co-participatory design process directly shaped the tool's architecture, embedding stochastic elements to mirror real-world variability and a scaffolded experience to support advocates at varying levels of readiness. The next phase will be to evaluate the tool's effectiveness in capacity-building and user self-efficacy.