

Lobbying Tips

- 1) **Be punctual.** Find out how much time is allotted for your visit and respect that lawmakers are extremely busy. They may be running late, but you should not be.
- 2) **Make introductions.** Tell the lawmaker your name and what issue you are there to discuss – don't assume he or she already knows who you are or the reason for your visit. If you live in their district, let them know.
- 3) **Stick to your bill and topic.** You may be a school board member and interested in school funding, but if your lobby day issue is in regard to funding for roads, stick to THAT issue and refrain from talking about other bills or issues.
- 4) **Be polite and friendly.** SMILE! Some legislators may disagree with you, but you should never be nasty or partisan. Regardless of their initial position, try to convince them of your cause.
- 5) **Know your bill and tell your story.** Lawmakers want to know the details about your bill or project and why it matters. How much money are you asking for and how will it be spent? Who will it help? What problem will it solve? What difference will it make?
- 6) **Tell you legislators about the opposition.** Lawmakers want to know the whole story, which includes hearing about any criticism or opposition to the bill. If you get the opposition out in the open, it allows you an opportunity to rebut it.
- 7) **Provide an informational handout.** The handout should explain the issue, the people who are served by your proposal and the costs/policies related to the bill. This is especially important when a busy lawmaker has to cut a meeting short. If a meeting gets canceled, leave the handout with a note on it.
- 8) **Stay on topic and keep “chit-chat” to a minimum.** Legislators like to talk about what is going on back home. The typical “How about that basketball team going to state!” or “Wasn't the church choir great last Sunday?” conversation eats up time and distracts from your true goals for the meeting.
- 9) **Ask for support and action.** Don't forget to ask for what you want! When wrapping up your meeting, ask the lawmaker to co-author the bill. Ask them to vote for the bill. Ask them to talk to the committee chair and legislative leaders to make your bill a priority.
- 10) **Thank the lawmaker.** Thank them when you leave and later send a note by e-mail or mail thanking them for their time. If your lawmaker is supportive of your bill, write a letter to their local paper thanking them. If the bill successfully passes, thank them again when session concludes. Organizations should recognize particularly helpful legislators with certificates, press releases and other recognitions.