



ADVOCACY TIPS

Tips on meeting a legislator or a member of the staff

- » When making an appointment, state the subject to be discussed and identify persons who will attend, noting whether they are constituents.
- » Select a spokesperson if others are going with you and agree on your presentation in advance of your meeting.
- » Know the facts, both legislatively and related to your position. If discussing a bill, know the number and title.
- » Present the facts in an orderly, concise, positive manner. Stay on the issue. Don't try to talk about too many different topics or your position may become confused.
- » Relate the positive impact of legislation you support and the problems it corrects. If you are affected personally, tell them your story and how an issue will impact you, your child, or your family.
- » Relate the negative impact of legislation you oppose and the problems it would create.
- » Leave fact sheets if possible.
- » Ask for favorable consideration, thank the legislator for his/her time and courtesy, and leave promptly.
- » Be sure to get the name of the staff member covering your issue.
- » Follow up with a note of thanks.
- » You may end up meeting with a staff member instead of the legislator if he/she is called away for votes or committee business. The staffer will convey your message to the legislator.

Tips on writing to a legislator

- » A personalized message is ALWAYS better than a form letter.
- » In a short first paragraph, state your purpose. Stick with one subject or issue. Support your position with the rest of the letter.
- » If a bill is the subject, cite it by both the bill title/name and number.
- » Be factual and support your position with information about how legislation is likely to affect you and others.
- » If you believe that legislation is wrong and should be opposed, say so. Indicate the likely adverse effects and suggest a better approach.
- » If you have any family, business, or political connection in regard to the issue, explain it. It may serve as identification when your point of view is considered.
- » Reach out to a legislator early in the session before a bill has been introduced if you have some ideas that you would like to see included in legislation.
- » Write the chairperson or members of a committee holding hearings on legislation in which you are interested. However, remember that you have more influence with legislators from your own district than with others.
- » Also write about legislation of which you approve. Legislators hear mostly from constituents who are against something. A note of appreciation will make your legislator remember you favorably the next time you write.

Tips on calling a legislator

- » Telephone calls are extremely effective when you need to make your views known quickly and time isn't available to write a letter or email.
- » When you call a legislator's office, you will talk to a member of the staff who will most likely ask your name and address for future follow-up. In addition to letting him/her know how you feel, you can also ask questions to learn the legislator's position on an issue as well as how he/she plans to vote on a particular bill.
- » Ask for the name of the specific staff person handling the issue in which you are interested, and inquire if you may have their email address or contact information. Offer to be a resource to staffers, which is a great way to form a relationship.