

EFFECTIVE LOBBYING

Below are some helpful suggestions for effective lobbying:

1. Devise a few central points that you want to make during your meeting with the legislator, but not too many of them.
2. Form lobbying teams consisting of a leader, a reporter, and an expeditor.
 - The *leader* is the person who sets the tone of the meeting. The leader establishes a rapport with the legislator. *He or she is friendly and courteous, and never shows hostility even to an obviously unsympathetic politician.* The leader discusses the questions with the legislator, as objective as possible, sometimes rewording and interpreting as necessary.
 - *The reporter is a listener.* After greeting the legislator and/or their staff, the reporter keeps in the background. The reporter concentrates on being perceptive and remembering as much as possible. *It is recommended that the reporter not take notes during the interview, because a flying pencil often inhibits free discussion.* The reporter listens not only to what is being said in words; but also looks for what else is being said or implied.
 - *The expeditor* has either a big job or a small one depending upon how the conversation is going. If the meeting seems off on a tangent, the expeditor can courteously interrupt with phrases like “You said a moment ago that...” or “Did you mean...” *The expeditor keeps the meeting moving,* and could signal its change of pace or termination. *Warning: The expeditor does not stifle a discussion that is providing some insights even though it is off the track. He or she does keep the conversation from meandering fruitlessly..*
3. During the lobbying visit:
 - Know the facts and always have written materials to leave.
 - Get your point of view across in the fewest possible words.
 - Do not be afraid to admit ignorance and never make up answers.
 - Find out the answer after the visit and report back to the legislator.
 - Leave on a friendly note, even if the meeting didn’t go as well as you had hoped. If you have a good rapport with a legislator, ask for his or her advice or assistance in reaching out to other legislators.
 - Be sure to thank the legislator for taking the time out of his or her busy schedule to meet with you even if he or she does not support your position.
 - Always leave the door open for another visit
 - Immediately after the visit the team should discuss the meeting and develop a written record of the visit.
 - Send follow-up letter(s) to the legislator(s) thanking them for the visit and re-stating the points you made during the meeting.

Some Thou-Shalt-Nots for Successful Lobbying

1. Do not argue with the legislator.
2. Do not be late. Be on time and do not prolong the interview beyond the agreed-upon duration.
3. Do not do all the talking. Remember you are there to hear the legislator's views as well as to express your own.
4. Do not let the legislator interview you.
5. Do not attempt to extract rash promises.
6. Do not negotiate with the legislator.
7. Do not comment on answers, except to clarify your position where it has been misunderstood.
8. Do not ask questions that are not germane to your pre-established lobbying points.

Explain Your Position

It does not take an expert to predict the impact of legislation. As a union member, a taxpayer, or a consumer, say in your own words how a bill or amendment will affect you. Do not forget that a bill can change as it moves through the legislative process. Be sure to urge your legislator to oppose crippling amendments or to support strengthening ones.

Ask For a Response

Urge your legislator to act in support or opposition to a particular bill, to co-sponsor an amendment or to take whatever legislative action you deem necessary. Feel free to request a written response from the legislator addressing your concerns, but always be courteous.

Remember: Be Brief
Be Clear
Be Polite