



ADVOCATES FOR
**OHIO'S
FUTURE**

*Strong Communities.
Better Lives.*

Advocates for Ohio's Future

Building Relationships with Ohio Legislators



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Overview

1. One-on-one visits
2. Where do I go for help with...?
3. Testimony at public hearings
4. General do's and don'ts

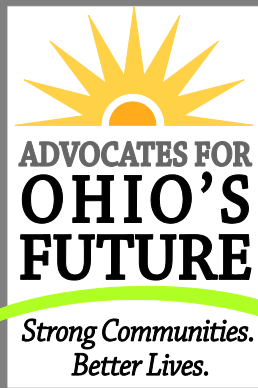


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One-on-One Meetings

- Meeting face-to-face with legislator or staff is most effective advocacy tool
- Not an imposition
- Opportunity for both parties - legislators depend on you
- 4 easy steps



Step 1

Arranging the Visit

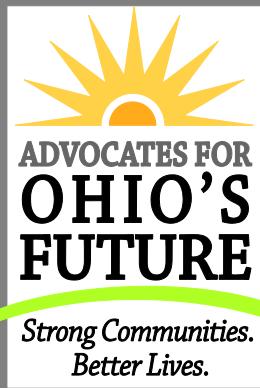
- Schedule 2-3 weeks ahead
- Ask for 30 minutes; expect 10
- Explain reason for visit
- Meeting with staff good alternative
- Confirm visit by letter or email



Step 2

Preparing for the Visit

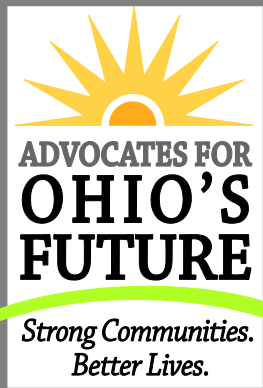
- Group visits: United front
- Facts and figures in moderation
- Research the legislator
- Information packet
- High-profile supporters



Step 3

During the Visit

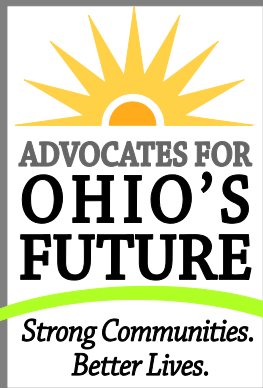
- Arrive a little early
- Be positive and friendly
- Stick to your message
- Make no assumptions
- Take notes
- Collect staff contact information
- KISS
- Control the conversation



Messaging

Effective Message Communication

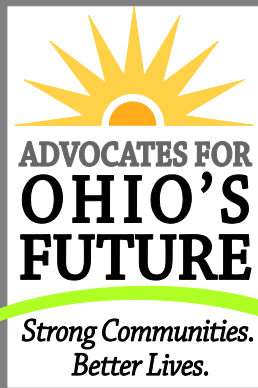
- Open climate
- Point to common ground
- Present message
- Frame issues on your terms
- Take a position
- Support your position
- Apply request to local needs



Messaging

Effective Message Communication

- Make a specific request
- Seek commitment
- Be responsive to questions
- Don't overreact
- Seek compromise
- Don't overstay welcome
- Opportunity for follow-up



Outline/Script for Legislative Visit

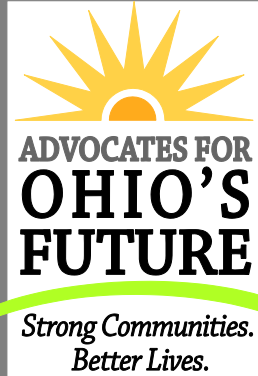
- Introductions (“I live in your district”)
- Personal connection: (“Thank you for supporting...”)
- AOF/organizational “elevator speech”
- Short story to illustrate the need
- The problem
- The ask (“Will you support/oppose...”)
- Discussion - remember to listen!
- Follow-up



Step 4

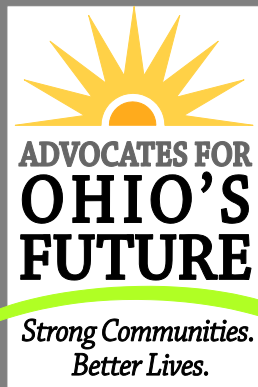
Following the Visit

- Debrief as a group
- Follow-up increases effectiveness
- Thank-you note



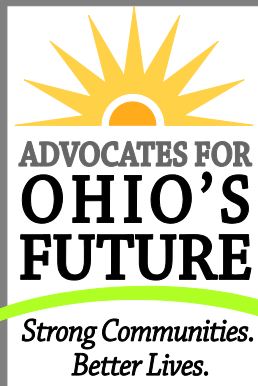
Where Do I Go for Help with . . . ?

- Finding out who my legislators are?
 - www.house.state.oh.us
 - www.ohiosenate.gov
- Finding proposed laws?
 - www.legislature.state.oh.us
- Finding AOF materials?
 - www.advocatesforohio.org/resources



Testifying at Committee Hearings

- Arrive early and sign in
- Bring written copies of testimony
- Identify yourself and your organization
- State position early in testimony
- Don't be redundant



Testifying at Committee Hearings

- Agree/disagree with previous speakers
- Limit to 10 minutes
- Provide source of any facts given
- Maintain composure
- Speak directly to committee
- End on positive note if possible
- Be prepared for questions



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Do's and Don'ts

DO

- Know the legislator's name and district
- Get to know the legislator's staff, keeping them informed
- Know the name, number, and status of your bill
- Dress appropriately and maintain courtesy
- Shake hands and maintain eye contact

DON'T

- Allow the legislator to move discussion away from your issue
- Be drawn into discussion of other issues
- Take a threatening, condescending, or confrontational tone with legislators
- Surprise or embarrass a legislator
- Misrepresent any information about your bill or support for it



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Do's and Don'ts

DO

- Make an appointment if possible
- Expect the legislator to be friendly
- Expect the legislator to be busy and frequently interrupted
- Commend the legislator for actions you approve
- Inform the legislator of other interest groups that support your bill

DON'T

- Threaten to defeat legislators in future elections
- Be drawn into ideological (or theological) arguments
- Overwhelm the legislator with lengthy materials
- Answer questions if you do not have sufficient information
- Give a knee-jerk response to negative, unfriendly comments



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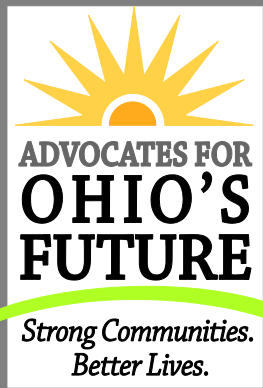
Do's and Don'ts

DO

- Meet individual legislators in groups of no more than two or three
- Present your views firmly and without apology
- Present clear, concise, focused arguments that support your bill

DON'T

- Buy the legislator a car
- Give them a paper bag full of large bills
- Leave your cell phone on during the meeting



Contact Us

Advocates for Ohio's Future

www.advocatesforohio.org

510 East Mound Street, Suite 200

Columbus, OH 43215

Fax: (614) 228-5150

Will Petrik

Outreach Director

wpetrik@advocatesforohio.org

614-602-2464

Scott Britton

Coordinator

sbritton@advocatesforohio.org

614-602-2463