



Do's and Don'ts for Lobbying

Most legislators are friendly, conscientious people who are working to establish public policy that will benefit the state. They are very willing to discuss legislation with citizens, though they are also quite busy. Discussions with legislators should be positive. Even though you may not win their support for the immediate issue, you may build a foundation for future support.

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
- ✓ 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
- ✓ 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
- ✓ end your contact with legislators on a positive note and thank them for their time
- ✓ after the visit, send any requested or follow-up information
- ✓ share results of the meeting with your allies
- ✓ ask questions when in doubt

Do not . . .

- ✓ 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
- ✓ 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