

## LOBBYING TIPS

1. ***Come prepared.*** Everyone in a group should know what role he/she is playing. Bring a set of materials for the legislator.
2. ***Identify yourself.*** If you or other members of your group are constituents of the legislator, be sure to mention it. For non-constituents, you can point out the basis for the visit, such as the legislator's membership on a key committee dealing with your issue.
3. ***Know your subject.*** You do not have to be an expert, but you know what effect the pending (or passed) legislation will have (or had) on the population you are representing. If available, convey data specific to the City or the area you are representing. Stay focused, be concise! *Tie your issue to the bigger picture* (i.e. improving the "state" of the State).
4. ***Know the legislator.*** Ascertain the legislator's position on the issue before the visit. If a sympathizer of your position, stress the importance of his/her continued leadership and support. In addition, tap into their inside knowledge for subsequent courses of action. If not a sympathizer of your position, see next tip.
5. ***Do not burn any bridges.*** It is easy to get worked up when talking to the opposition. That's fine, but be sure that you are courteous about disagreements and that you leave the meeting on good terms with the legislator. Remember that the only way they are going to change their minds is if they are listening to what you have to say.
6. ***Remember that you are the boss.*** Your tax dollars pay the legislator's salary. (Note: just because you are not employed, does not mean you do not pay taxes! You pay sales taxes when you make purchases.) You are the employer and they are the employees. You should be courteous, but do not be intimidated. They are responsible to you. You should feel completely comfortable in your right to be speaking to them. They are usually grateful for your input.
7. ***Be concise and specific about what you want.*** The time allotted for a legislative visit is usually about 15 minutes. Get your points across and let the legislator know what you expect from him/her (i.e. talk to Senate Majority Leader or support certain piece of legislation, etc.). Make your "ask" specific.
8. ***Follow-up.*** In addition to thanking the legislator at the conclusion of your visit, send him/her a brief thank-you letter. In your letter, outline any commitments the legislator offered. If you promised some additional information, you have to follow through or you may not be taken seriously the next time you visit that office.