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Building the **Right to Health** Movement



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Legislative Visits Workshop



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Your Voice Makes a Difference!





Goals of a Lobby Visit

- To educate a legislator about a particular topic and **why it is important**
 - **To YOU and your community**
- To encourage a legislator to take (or oppose) a specific **action**
- **Build a relationship**



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Steps of a lobby visit

- Preparation
- Tell your story, make the ask
- Follow up, follow up, follow up

Before your visit: Prepare

- Gather a crew
- Schedule your visit
 - Call the office – ask to schedule a meeting
 - Often you will have to follow up by email

- Do some background research
 - Issue
 - Legislator

- **Issue Background**
 - Prepare the “elevator speech”
 - Know main arguments and anticipate objections
 - Gather a couple good documents that outline or are relevant to your topic for “leave-behinds”



- Issue background
 - Most importantly – **KNOW YOUR STORY**
 - Why is this important to you? To your community?



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Preparation Cont.

**Nearly 100% of the time YOU WILL
KNOW MORE THAN THE STAFFER
about the topic.**

So if you are not an expert, that is ok. It is most important that it is coming from you as a **constituent** with first hand experience.



- Legislator Background
- Committee assignments?
- Main issues on their website?
- Have they voted on similar legislation?
 - <https://www.govtrack.us/>



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Preparation Cont.

- **KNOW THEIR STORY**
 - **Why is this important to them?**
To their constituents?



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Preparation – Example

- Lizzy, our fav
- <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members>
- <https://www.warren.senate.gov/>



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Preparation – Practice!

- Split up the agenda and assign roles
- Meet beforehand and practice!

- Introductions
- Background – WHY this is important to us
 - Core: Personal, sentimental stories
 - Essentials: Facts, stats
 - Elected official's record on this issue
- **Make the ASK**
- Close/Follow Up

During your visit: Introductions

- Thank them for their time.
- Let the legislator know who you are, who you represent
 - I am a young professional with PIH Engage and we have X members from all over the state
- Let the staff member introduce themselves

During your visit: Tell your story

- Example:
- Why do you care about this issue?
- Use details – use this time to humanize your issue



During your visit: Facts

- **Example:**
- **Facts are great – but don't overwhelm – your personal story and connection is most important!**
- **Don't worry if you can't recall a fact or if you don't know the answer to a question**
 - **You can always get back to them by email!**

- Introductions
- Background – WHY this is important to us
 - Core: Personal, sentimental stories
 - Essentials: Facts, stats
 - Elected official's record on this issue
- **Make the ASK**
- Close/Follow Up

Follow up, follow up, follow up!

- Send thank you note and follow up resources (answer any pending questions)
- **Follow up on your ask – try to get a concrete answer or proof if necessary (signature on a letter, contact with colleagues)**
- Plan long-term follow up (future visit and communication)

- Remember: it is your personal connection that counts!
- Assign roles and practice – leave enough time for this (30-45 min)
- Ask the staff about parking, leave plenty of time
- Bring government-issued ID (particularly if in larger city)



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Let's Go Make Change!

****Special thanks to Jacki Britz, MS3, and NPA Copello Fellows
for use of some of their slides to create this presentation****

- Handouts reinforce the message and help guide the conversation
- Visual information may be easier to understand and recall
- BUT: be familiar with the material and don't overwhelm the audience

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- Streamlined and direct
 - Have the answer in the question
 - Difficult to say “no” to
 - Ex a) Will you help end AIDS?
 - Ex b) Will you commit to restoring \$300 million to the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief so that up to one million people won’t do without treatment next year?

- Prepare message for supporters and opponents
 - **Middle of the road:**
 - Present information on why they should support issue
 - **Opponents:**
 - Acknowledge opposition and focus on benefits on actions. Offer new perspective.

- Prepare message for supporters and opponents
 - **Vocal supporters:**
 - How can you help them to further this issue?
 - **Non-vocal supporters:**
 - Encourage them to take action.



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Legislative visit “don’ts”

- Ask for vague support.
 - Do: have a tangible and timely ask
- Burn bridges or be argumentative
- Guess the answer to a question
 - Do: tell them you’ll get back to them
- Underestimate a staffer
- Stick to facts and statistics
 - Do: make it personal!