

Ten Tips On Lobbying

1. **Come prepared.** Everyone should know what role he or she is playing. Bring a set of materials for the legislator and extra copies for the staff. Know the issues, and know who are your allies and opponents.
2. **Identify everyone in the room.** It is important for the legislator to know exactly whom you represent, where your organization is based and how many members your group has. Be sure to point out which advocates are constituents of the legislator.
3. **Say what you know.** If you don't know the answer to a question, acknowledge it and offer to get the facts and get back to the legislator or staffer.
4. **Be specific and direct about what you want.** Remind yourself what the purpose of the meeting is. Do you want the legislator to support a bill? Vote a certain way? Speak to the Speaker or Senate Majority Leader? Make sure you ask in a clear, direct manner.
5. **Stay focused.** Make sure to the conversation back to the issue you came to lobby on. Do not leave before you get answers to the key questions.
6. **Don't argue.** No matter what, stay cool. You don't win any points for passion by arguing with a legislator or staffer.
7. **Maintain control of the meeting.** Kick off the meeting by clearly stating what topics you are covering. You are the one with the agenda.
8. **Briefing materials should be just that – brief.** Legislators or staff will read a well-put-together one-page fact sheet, probably nothing more than that.
9. **Anticipate the arguments of your opponent.** It is better to address your opponent's arguments early in the dialogue. Do so directly and openly, without defensiveness.
10. **Follow-up and follow through.** Send a thank you note to the legislator or staffer. The note should memorialize the commitments you extracted in the meeting. Follow-up after an appropriate interval to find out if your legislator did what he or she committed to do. It's also important for you to follow through on commitments that you made as well.