



We Educate

Influencing Strategies

USE A PERSONAL STORY

The importance of constituents' personal stories and the influence they have in the policy process cannot be overstated. As legislators meet with the person whom the policy affects, the focus of the legislator becomes clear and he/she feels obligated to help that person.

BUILD LASTING RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEGISLATORS

Establish a friendly rapport with the legislator and staffer and find a way to connect with him/her. Become a helpful expert and offer your assistance to the legislator. Show how the issue affects the legislator's constituents and you will be relied on for advice. Communicate frequently and keep the legislator and staffers informed on the issues.

KNOW YOUR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL FOOTPRINT

Your memberships, organizations, associations, clubs, your voting district, your employees, or employer all go into comprising the depth of your world and influence. The legislator will recognize you as an entire group.

LISTEN TO YOUR LOBBYISTS

Timing is critical on occasions and advocates need to act when needed with letter, visits, or emails.

TIPS FOR MEETINGS

Be well prepared when you walk into the meeting

- Know the background of the person you are speaking with
- Know the issue—you will be listened to if you have a command of the facts and are thoughtful
- Rehearse, place your most powerful punch first
- Arrive only five minutes beforehand
- Make a nice greeting and then get down to business in the first five minutes
- Have a specific request or "ask"
- Be consistent with your message
- E-mailing is the best form of communication—if you give a hardcopy, limit it to one page
- Provide feedback to the professional lobbyist
- Follow up your visit with correspondence no later than two weeks after visit

MEETING WITH STAFFERS

When meeting with staffers, build rapport, get and give a business card

Remember that the young staffer (most of the time—the brightest star in the class) is the go between with you and the legislator.

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATION

Legislators appreciate the connection with their constituents

- Personally written emails are preferred since they arrive immediately. Phone calls are usually tallied and the message can be omitted. Faxes are considered a burden and waste of paper.
- Sending an email is an effective way to share a compelling story that will get the legislator's attention.

First Paragraph—state your position as an effected individual and sharing knowledge of the impact will get a response

Second Paragraph—tell your story with both emotion and fact

Third Paragraph—Share data on how the decision will affect voters

Fourth Paragraph—Share enthusiasm in you communication and express appreciation

WHICH LETTERS GET READ?

- Well-written messages crafted with correct grammar are more likely to be read by the legislator Messages with passionate words can help move legislators into action.
- Sparking a little humor may grab the attention in the communication while still making your point.
- Letters from children get special attention.
- Communication which enlightens on ideas or data not previously recognized or known may get the attention of the legislator.
- Communication that represents a group of constituents may also get read by the legislator.
- A thank-you note is a polite thing to do and will make a lasting positive impression.

A Helpful Link

Individual Initiatives Improve Healthy Housing Through Public Policy

http://raddonthesilentkiller.blogspot.com/2014_10_01_archive.html