LOBBYING BY PERSONAL VISIT AT THE STATE CAPITAL

This is the most effective way to lobby—lobbying legislators face-to-face. As politicians, legislators are generally very comfortable with oral communication, and they often enjoy and respond to this sort of interaction far better than they do to reports and letters. Personal discussions let them put a face to a name, assess your commitment to an issue, pepper you with questions about your group and the issue, and make a quick assessment of your character. Legislators tend to be "people people," and lobbying by personal visit takes advantage of this characteristic.

If a legislator gets the message that a constituent is in the Statehouse, he or she will usually come off the chamber floor, leave a committee hearing, or find some way to meet with a constituent. The fact that a constituent has taken the time to travel to Springfield and seek out the legislator provides evidence of the level of concern. No legislator wants to be known back home for having snubbed a constituent in Springfield. Take advantage of this fact. Here are some do's and don'ts when lobbying:

BE PROFESSIONAL

- Keep your discussion with your legislator brief—5-10 minutes, maximum.
- Visit your legislator with a small group—three people are optimum.
- Make sure you have "one clear message."
- If you are the legislator's constituent, introduce yourself as such.
- Let the legislator know immediately whom you represent.
- Be clear about your position and what you would like the legislator to do.
- Give the legislator a one-page "fact sheet" of what the bill entails.
- Be firm in expressing your position.
- Always be calm and courteous when dealing with legislators.
- ***To call your legislator off the chamber floor, do the following***:
  - ***Go to the main entrance of the chamber or the appropriate side door.***
  - ***Give a note to the doorkeeper that explains who you are & subject matter.***
- Thank the legislator for his/her time.
- If appropriate, ask the legislator if you can visit him/her in their "home" office later.

MOST IMPORTANT

FOLLOW-UP with:

- A *personal at-home visit*.
- A "thank you" *letter*.
- A *telephone call*: discussing your Statehouse visit and/or a "thank you" for their time.
- An *e-mail*—more and more legislators are using this resource to interact.

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