



Tips for Advocacy

Advocacy

- Public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy
- Any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or defends, or pleads on behalf of others
- An activity by an individual or group that aims to influence decisions within political, economic, and social institutions

Advocacy Action

Plan Ahead

1. Define your goals
2. Identify who needs to hear your message
3. Identify who your allies are
4. Identify who your opposition is
5. Define your timeline
6. With that information, approach the decision-makers

1. Define your goals

- o Do you want to change a law? Or get a new law passed?
- o Do you want funding for a facility or program?
- o Do you want public support for a ballot issue?
- o Etc.

2. Identify who needs to hear your message

- o Stakeholders?
- o Decision makers? (State Legislature? City/County Council?)
- o Public/community?

3. & 4. Identify your allies and your opposition

- o Are there existing coalitions?
- o Are there interested community organizations?
- o Frame your arguments based on who is supporting and who is opposing

5. Define your timeline

- o State legislation takes 9 months to 3 years; often more
- o Steps to developing timeline:
 - Persuade legislator(s) to introduce a bill; a champion is important
 - Identify other co-sponsors
 - Determine the legislative committee schedule
- Organize around public hearings; note, if no public hearing, the bill does not proceed
- Note executive sessions (Legislative committee decision process)

- Adoption in house of origin
- Repeat in other chamber
- Reconciliation if bills passed in both chambers are different
- When bill passes, Governor has to sign

6. Approach Legislators

Divide up the work

- Use your plan to assign tasks
- Monitor multiple committees in the Legislature by assignment; keep each other informed

If you hire a lobbyist, you can expect:

- Weekly reports
- Alerts on short notice
- Appointments set up for you
- Requests for you to testify

Get to know the Legislature before session starts

- Find your own local Legislators
- Sign up for their newsletters
- Meet with them before session
- Continue to communicate during session
- Become very familiar with the Legislative web site

Meetings, phone calls, emails or letters

- In-person meetings are best; hard to get once session starts
- Phone calls work best if you establish a relationship with the Legislative Aide
- Emails work for most Legislators
- Letters on the record must be sent to the Committee Chair and Staff prior to the public hearing

Your best friends: Legislative staff

- Legislative Aides can convey information both ways
- Committee staff are nonpartisan but invaluable

To be persuasive

- Meet with legislators between sessions
- During session:
 - Organize other supporters
 - Testify re: advantages of the proposal, positive statements that rebut your opposition
 - Write letters/emails
 - Send thank you notes!

Amplify your position and support

- Petitions
- Social media
- Testimony about “lived experience”