



Tips for Citizen Lobbying

WHY YOU SHOULD LOBBY

Lobbying is talking about what matters to you. Lobbying is not a dirty word. It is talking with your elected official or a member of their staff about important issues.

It's your job to tell them what's important. Policymakers are inundated with thousands of different issues every day. By talking to them about these issues, it helps them recognize that it's important to their constituents and motivates them to act.

You're the expert. Nine times out of ten you will know more about the issue than the staffer or elected official you're meeting with, just by reading our one-page fact sheets.

It works! You can make a real impact by merely talking to your official.

INSIDER HINTS

- Arrive early, but don't be surprised if the staffer or official you are meeting with is late.
- Politicians are people too. It's easy to be intimidated by all of the rhetoric and grandeur but at the end of the day they're just normal folks like you and me.
- When you sit down and talk, be patient and listen, but don't let the official or staffer run the whole show - it's YOUR visit! Introduce all of the delegation's members and let them know where you are from in their district or state.
- Stick to the issues and stay on message.
- If you don't know the answer to one of their questions, don't try to make up an answer. Tell them you're not sure and you'll ask one of our staff members to reply. This will give us a good reason to talk with them.
- Do not give them the fact sheet until the end of the meeting or they will spend your time reading instead of listening to you.
- Conclude your meeting with "the asks": (See What Congress Can Do Sheets). Remember Hill staff would prefer to be agreeable, but not to agree with anything. Your job is to get clear answers.
- Let the staffer know that you will follow up to find out if the official agreed to the "asks."
- To follow up, call or email your contact to thank them for the meeting and find out which of our "asks" the official will follow through on. Often you will need to call back many times before you get a firm "yes" or "no." Polite persistence will pay off; once they understand you are not going away, they will respond!

For more information, please contact Anu Joshi, Manager of Membership & Outreach, at ajoshi@globalsolutions.org, (202) 546-3950 x102