

TEN INFORMAL RULES OF LOBBYING



1. Consider yourself an information source
Legislators have limited time, staff and interest on any one issue. They cannot be as informed as you on all issues. YOU can bridge the information gap.
2. Don't criticize
Never openly criticize legislators or their staff, especially in print. The same goes for political parties, organizations or other groups.
3. Tell the truth
There is no faster way to lose credibility than to give incomplete, false or misleading information to a legislator or staff. If you don't know the answer, tell them; then offer to get the information for them.
4. Know who is on your side
It is helpful for a legislator to know what other groups, individuals, state agencies and/or legislators are working with you on an issue.
5. Make the legislator aware of any personal connections you may have
No matter how insignificant you may think a connection is, if you have friends, relatives and/or colleagues in common, let the legislator know ... it may make the difference in getting an appointment or having your position heard.
6. Be specific about your request
If you want a vote, information, answers to a question – whatever it is – make sure you ask for it directly ... and get an answer.
7. Follow up
It is very important to find out if your legislators do what they promised. It is then very important to thank them. If for some reason they did not do it, ask for an explanation. You can then try to change their position.
8. Don't "burn any bridges"
It is easy to get emotional over issues. Be sure you leave any conversation with your legislator on good enough terms that you can go back on future issues.
9. Remember, YOU are the constituent!
Your tax money pays legislators' salaries. You should always be courteous, but don't be intimidated. They are responsible to you, and most often, they are grateful for your input.
10. Say "thank you"
Say "thank you" often, and mean it! It is virtually impossible to say thanks too many times.