

GENERAL TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

1. Spend time developing relationships with the legislative aides and other key staff members.
2. Don't be offended if a legislator is unable to meet with you and requests that you meet with his/her aide or staff instead,. Meeting with the legislative staff can be almost as valuable as meeting directly with the legislator.
3. Don't overload a personal visit or phone call with too many issues. One or two topics per contact are appropriate.
4. Be courteous, remember names and thank those who help you, both in person and with a follow up note,
5. Your word is your bond. Maintain your integrity.,
6. Never lie or exaggerate your cause,
7. Use accurate fact sheets and talking points to explain your position on an issue or proposed policy/law,
8. Admit when you don't know the answer, However, always offer to find the answer and get the information to them. Follow through!
9. Don't make promises you can't deliver,
10. Spend time with legislators even if their position differs from yours. You may be able to lessen the intensity of their opposition and perhaps change the legislator's view of an issue.
11. Don't threaten, pressure, attack or beg a legislator to get a vote,
12. Remember, today's opponent may be tomorrow's ally.
13. Look for friends everywhere. In politics, a friend is someone willing to work with you on an issue regardless of party affiliation or liberal or conservative viewpoint,. The person may disagree with you on EVERY OTHER issue.
14. Know your allies, inside and outside the field. Use them as a way to broaden your base of support letting your legislator know the other agencies that are supportive, both in the district and throughout the state,.
15. Become familiar with the legislative process in Virginia, i.e. how a bill becomes a law,
16. Don't expect them to know everything. Legislators in Virginia deal with about 3,000 bills per session. They cannot know everything.