

Tips for Lobbying

Meeting with your lawmakers is your right, but it also carries with it responsibilities. Here are some tips to make it a successful visit:

Before your visit...

- Call to schedule an appointment if possible.
- Realize that your appointment is tentative.
- Always be appreciative and gracious when or if the legislator arrives.
- Dress neatly and look professional.

Make the most of it!

- Leverage your local / county connections.
- Mention a family name or place that the legislator might recognize.
- Discuss any mutual acquaintances you both have in common.
- The Bottom Line: Try to connect in the brief time you have, make it work for you!

Know your issues...

- How does your issue affect workers?
- What impact does it have on your community, the county or the state?
- What are the outcomes with or without it?
- Speak clearly and to the point.

Consider their worldview

- Are they a Republican or a Democrat?
- What is their working background?
- How long have they served in the General Assembly?
- Where do they “rank” in the power structure?

The “Do” list...

- Always thank legislators for their time.
- Tell them how much you appreciate their public service, their commitment to NC and to the people of your district.
- Be very conscious of any suggestion they show that the meeting is over!

The “Do NOT” list...

- Don’t argue your point with a legislator.
- Never make up statistics, information or “real people stories” – speak of what you know, from your heart.
- Never tell legislators they are incorrect.
- Never overstay your welcome.

Tips for Corresponding with Lawmakers

Visiting with your state and federal lawmakers is the most effective way to educate them on the issues. But it is not the only way to reach out. Here are some tips to bear in mind when writing and emailing or calling your elected senators and representatives:

Calling your lawmakers...

- In the case of state lawmakers, usually a legislative office assistant will answer phone calls. For members of Congress, the person who answers is often an intern.
- Give your name, and tell them where you are calling from.
- Refer to a specific bill number or issue, and tell them you either support or oppose it and wish that the legislator will support your view when he or she votes.
- Keep your message concise. Ask for a response.
- **Be polite**, even if you are angry or upset.
- Always thank the person who answers for relaying your message to your lawmaker.

Writing a letter or e-mail...

- Keep it formal.
 - » Address the letter to “The Honorable <full name>”.
(For ex., “The Honorable G. K. Butterfield”)
 - » Use the correct salutation for their office.
(For ex., “Dear Representative Butterfield” or “Dear Senator Hagan”)
- Tell the lawmaker you are his or her constituent.
- Be personal and very specific about your concerns.
 - » If writing about a specific bill, include the bill number.
(For ex., “S.101” for senate bills or “H.101” for house bills)
- Provide an example about how the issue affects you or working families like yours.
- **Remember to be political.** Ask the lawmaker to vote a certain way or take a certain action that conforms with your interest.
- Include your full name, address, phone number, and email address so he or she can reply to your letter or email.
- Mail your letter to:
 - » *Members of the U.S. Senate:*
The Honorable (full name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
 - » *Members of the U.S. House:*
The Honorable (full name)
United States House
Washington, DC 20510
 - » *Members of the N.C. General Assembly:*
Check their profile page. Look up your members at:
<http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/GIS/RandR07/Representation.html>