

16 Rules of Effective Lobbying

1. It helps if you like politics...better if you like politicians.
You are asking someone who doesn't have to help you, to do something you want done. You must approach in a positive frame of mind.
2. Always make the politician's job easier, not harder.
Make information simple.
Bring in other groups that agree with you.
Don't make the politician do the work.
3. Meet with staff at least 95% of the time.
Staff runs the world!
4. Reduce positions/requests to 60 seconds or one long paragraph.
You MUST make your points concise. Have backup available to provide as required or requested.
5. Break issues into three categories
 - A. 1 thing you MUST have to win
 - B. 1-3 things you would like to have, but can give up to get #1
 - C. Wish list you are prepared to abandon to get #1
6. Understand the opponent's position better than he does!
Force yourself to present them in the positive, AND THEN rebut each one!
You MUST get inside your opponent's arguments.
7. Never demonize or personalize you opponents (regardless of what you think).
8. Numbers count!! Politicians count! Numbers = votes – money!!
9. In spite of #8, keep meeting attendees to a minimum. Pack hearings, but limit mtgs.
10. Know the difference between “grass roots” and “grass tops”.
Grass tops – key people/politically important people. USE BOTH!
11. Be an expert truly! But try not to show it. Have a quality that shows expertise, but try not to flaunt it.
USE YOUR BEST PRESENTER – make an effective presentation.
Politicians want good policy and respect real knowledge.
12. LISTEN TO QUESTIONS POLITICIANS AND STAFF ASK!!!
Drop everything else and answer those questions first.
13. Understand the pure politics of the issue and legislative situation and frame what you are doing accordingly. (This is where a lobbyist can help and guide your strategy. They know what politically is at stake.)
14. Its all emails these days so don't fight it. (Unless you have no choice or are asked to use fax or snail mail).
15. When possible use a powerpoint presentation at a hearing. Include hardcopies for all parties present at the hearing including staff.

16. Fundraising and political contributions matter. OFF-season counts. Politicians need to know you in a positive way. Build year-round relationships with politicians. Contributions count. Lots of small contributions means number of people. Attend political events.

Lobbying is most effective when done by citizens. However, if the “other side” has professional help, or it is a BIG issue, you NEED professional help. A lobbyist can make strategic game plans and map the best route (knows the players, the best and most effective plans for success). Otherwise, citizens alone can do the job.

Lobbyists are the political tour guides. Particularly at the state level where they are very useful. Generally they work on a fixed fee; coordinate meetings; figure out the best strategy; follow up with staff.

The above information was presented by Mr. Mark Cushing, Attorney at Law, at the 2007 NAIA Animal Summit: Finding Solutions. Mr. Cushing is a political strategist, corporate executive and trial lawyer. Mr. Cushing is a former special assistant to the Governor of Oregon and has practiced in Washington, D.C. representing a wide range of private and public clients before Congress and the Executive Branch, in particular the Department of Agriculture. Mr. Cushing is an avid supporter of the NAIA suggestings that NAIA can fulfill the need for a national organization to be the focal group by coordinating all animal interest groups into an effective educational and lobbying entity.