

## TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH LEGISLATORS AND THEIR STAFF

Legislators serve many constituents and address a wide range of policy issues. Here are some important points to keep in mind when communicating with legislators.

### 1. Remember that Legislators and Their Staff are Human Beings

- Conversations should not be argumentative or confrontational.
- In advocacy, respectful relationships build the foundation for change.

### 2. Share Personal Stories

- Personal stories are extremely powerful and are often remembered.
- Keep stories very brief (under two minutes) and tied to legislation and policy issues.

### 3. Identify Yourself as a Constituent

- Let your legislator know that you live in their district and identify yourself as a constituent.
- Legislators are more likely to focus on issues pertaining to their district and constituents.

### 4. Increase Number of Communications

- Advocates should craft key messages and consider asking friends and family to help in contacting legislators on important issues.
- The more communications a legislator receives about an issue the more likely they will act.

### 5. Repeat Your Main Points

- The frequency legislators hear about an issue plays a role in whether they favor a cause.

### 6. Keep Materials Brief, Straightforward, and Simple

- When sharing printed materials with a legislator, try to keep it to a one-page, bulleted fact sheet that reinforces the key points on the issue.
- Lengthy materials are often not read.

### 7. Clearly Communicate What You are Asking for

- Be specific on the action you want taken, such as support for a bill or policy.
- Stay informed on where legislators stand on issues and actions they have taken.

### 8. Follow Up

- Thank legislators when they support the issue or take a public stance on it.

### 9. Share Media Coverage

- If a media story covers an issue you have previously raised with the legislator, share a copy of the article and remind them about the previous communication on the topic.

### 10. Take Notes

- Keep a record of your communications to maintain dialogues and foster relationships.

