

...for Successful Personal Visits with Elected Officials

There are certain protocols to remember when communicating with legislators in person. Here are a few communication tips for personal visits to your elected officials.

BE ON TIME	Make certain you reach your appointment on time, or a few minutes early.
KEEP GROUP SMALL	Limit your group to 3 to 5 people. Agree in advance who will be the spokesperson (if applicable) to introduce the group and explain the purpose of the visit.
BE PREPARED	Be informed about your issue; know the specific number of the legislative bill and author's name. Know what you want to say. Emphasize how the issue affects you, your local and your community.
FOCUS ON ISSUES	Present your views politely, but persuasively. Use relevant facts. Bring an expert on the subject to support your views, if possible.
BE BRIEF	Since legislators have extremely busy schedules, plan on getting your message across in 5 to 10 minutes at the very most. Don't get sidetracked into small talk -- make your time really count — "visit" only after you have gotten your point across.
BE FIRM	Find out exactly where your legislator stands on the issue. Ask what action he or she intends to take. Don't be afraid to press for specifics.
LISTEN CAREFULLY	Be ready to answer questions clearly. If you don't know the answer to a question admit it — tell the legislator you will provide the answer later. Listen carefully to your legislator's viewpoint — even if you disagree.
REPORT BACK	Results of your visit are very important to your lobbyists in Sacramento. Appoint a lead person who will report back to the lobbyists.
FOLLOW UP	Send a thank you note or letter to your legislator. Also include a summary of your position plus any other new information that supports your views.