



Effective Lobbying Techniques



Identify the bill or issue

- Many bills are introduced in each session
- Be specific
- Try to give the bill number or describe it by popular title ("prescription drug monitoring program", "capturing use tax from out of state sellers", etc.)

Be timely

Contact your legislators at the appropriate time

- Sometimes a bill is out of committee or has passed the House before a helpful letter/email or phone call arrives
- Inform your legislators while there is still time to take effective action

Concentrate on your own delegation

The Representative of your district and the Senator of your Senatorial District cast your votes in the Legislature and want to know your views

Be reasonably brief

Many issues are complex, but your opinions and arguments stand a better chance if stated as concisely as the subject matter permits. It is not necessary that letters be typed--only that they be legible.

Express your own views

A personal letter or email is far better than a form letter/email or signature on a petition. Form letters/emails are readily recognizable and often receive form replies.

- What is your personal viewpoint?
- How is your city affected?
- These things matter!

Give your reasons for taking a stand

Statements like "Vote against H.B. 100; I'm bitterly opposed" don't help much. If a legislator does not realize all the possible effects of a bill, your letter/email may help him understand what it means to an important segment of their constituency.

Be constructive

If a bill deals with a problem you admit exists, but you believe the bill is the wrong approach, tell them what the right approach is. Be positive.

If you have expert knowledge, share it with your Legislators

Of all the letters/emails legislators receive, perhaps one in a hundred comes from a constituent who is an expert on the subject. The opinions expressed in the others are important, and will be heeded, but this one is a real gold mine for the conscientious legislator.

Say "well done" when it's deserved

Legislators are human, too, and they appreciate an occasional "well done" from people who believe they have done the right thing. But even if you think they were wrong on an issue, they would welcome a courteous letter telling them you disagreed; it may help them on another issue at a later date

Don't make threats or promises

Legislators usually want to do the popular thing, but this is not their only motivation; most the legislators want to do what is the best for the state.

Don't berate your Legislator

You cannot hope to persuade a legislator of your position by calling them names. If you disagree with your legislator, give reasons for your disagreement. Try to keep the dialogue open. Be respectful.

Don't pretend to wield vast political influence

Write your Legislator as an individual.

Don't become a constant "pen pal" on every issue

Quality, rather than quantity is what counts.

Don't demand a commitment before the facts are in

If you have written a personal letter and stated your reasons for a particular stand, you have a right to know your legislator's present thinking on the question. But writers who "demand to know how you will vote on H.B. 100" should bear in mind the complexities of the legislative process. Be reasonable

Organize Meetings With Your Legislators

Many city officials organize a formal meeting in their city with their legislators, often a luncheon or a dinner to discuss their positions on legislation affecting cities. This is often done just prior to the start of the legislative session

Develop a "Special" Relationship With Your Legislators

It is most helpful to have a personal relationship with your legislators. If they perceive you as a "friend", rather than just another constituent who wants them to vote a certain way, they will be much more attentive to your views. Visit often with your legislators, not just when we need their vote on a crucial issue.

ADVOCACY MAKES A DIFFERENCE

- Local advocates can be very influential to Legislators due to connections, relationships and expertise
- Advocacy is important both at home and in the state capitol.

ASSESS YOUR CONNECTIONS

- If you do not know your Legislator, you can look at what social media connections you may have in common
- Missouri House of Representatives - <https://house.mo.gov/>
- Missouri Senate - <https://www.senate.mo.gov/>

FINDING OPPORTUNITIES TO DELIVER YOUR MESSAGE

- One-on-One Meeting
- Community Events
- Political Events

WHAT ARE YOUR OBJECTIVES

- Building a personal relationship with your legislators
- Educating your legislators on important facts about your city and the services provided by the city
- Explaining the positive or negative impact certain legislation would have on your city
- Ensuring that your legislators consider you as a resource

SETTING A MEETING

- Contact Legislator
- Set a time, date and location for the meeting
- Ensure that they have proper directions and parking information (when applicable)
- Make sure the Legislator has your cell phone number in case he/she is running late or needs to cancel

THE MEETING

- Do your research: find a photo; read their bio
- Review some of the legislation he/she sponsored in the past
- Determine if, through your research, you have something in common or can connect your issue to their values or legislative priorities
- If you will be taking someone else with you, each person needs to do this homework
- If you have a group, determine who will be the lead speaker

FOLLOW UP AFTER THE MEETING

- Be sure to quickly follow up after the meeting by providing any information you said you would get to the Legislator
- Send a hand-written note thanking them for their time
- Continue to develop the relationship by setting future meetings, inviting them to council meetings or other community events
- Be sure to schedule time to see your Legislators whenever you will be in Jefferson City during the legislative session

KEEP MML in the LOOP

After meeting or speaking with your legislator (at home or at the Capitol) let the MML staff know what you learned

MML advocacy team will make a follow-up visit with your legislator

Keeping MML advocacy team informed of meetings will ensure that we all **Speak with a United Voice**