



Grassroots Advocacy and Lobbying

Basic Tips and Tactics



What is advocacy?

Advocacy = the general promotion of an idea or cause.

It includes:

- identifying the issue or problem
- educating the public and the media
- proposing a solution
- organizing people to act



What is lobbying?

Lobbying = asking an elected or appointed official to vote in a particular way on a specific piece of legislation or rule.

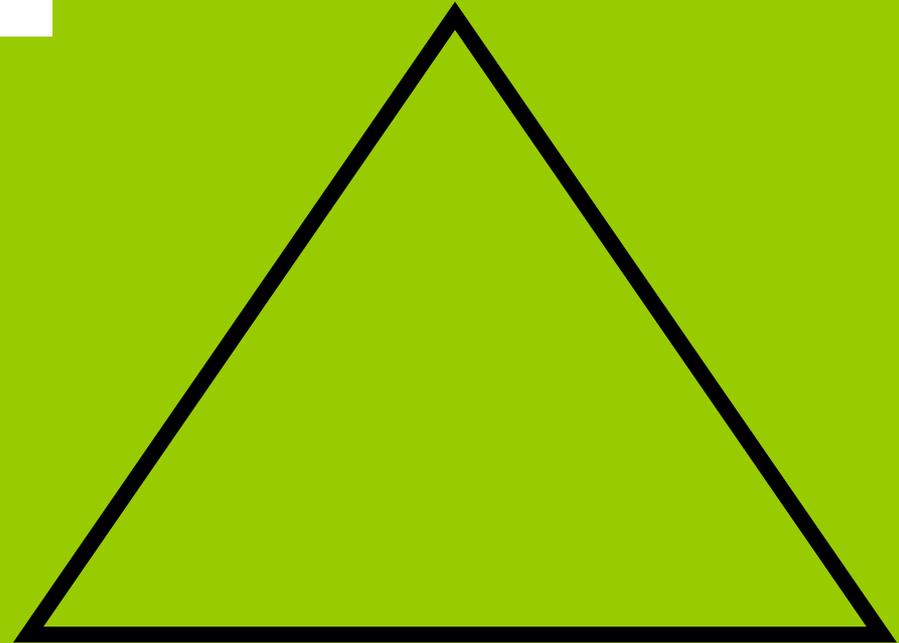
Lobbying is limited by legal statute.

Advocacy is unlimited.



Tools of Advocacy

**Lobbying
Decision-makers**



**Working with
the media**

**Organizing the
Grassroots**

**You do not need to be
a professional to lobby.**

Effective Grassroots Lobbying



Research

- Know the issue
- Where is the decision made? Who are the key decision-makers?
- Who are your champions – or can become one?
- When is the vote happening?
- Who is the person you're lobbying – District? Interests? Issues? Ambitions? Influencers?

Effective Grassroots Lobbying



Strategy

- How does lobbying fit into the whole campaign?
- What are the best tactics?
- Who are your best spokespeople?

Effective Grassroots Lobbying



Preparation

- Clear, concise written materials – not binders of info
- Plan your message – clear, concise, relevant, empowering?
- Who has relationships – who can build them?

Effective Grassroots Lobbying



Ways to communicate

- Letters – form, petition, personal ...
- E-mail
- Phone calls
- Letters to the editor – op-ed
- Paid ads
- Face-to-face meetings

Effective Grassroots Lobbying



Meeting

- Call to set up an appointment
- In-District meetings (longer): educational; accountability sessions; events
- In-Capitol meetings (shorter): usually focused on a direct ask on legislation
- Plan what you will say – who will say it – rehearse it
- What do you want as an outcome?

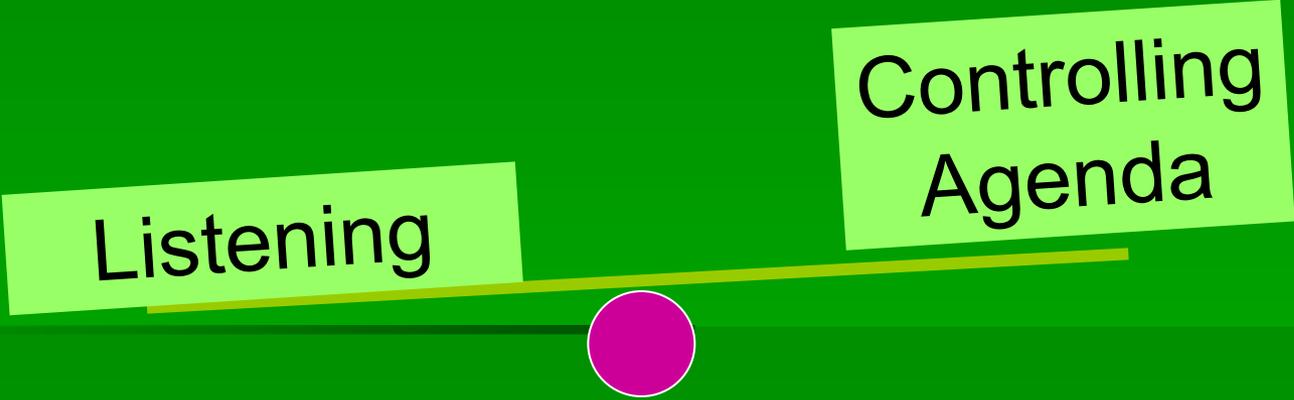
Tips for Effective Lobbying Meetings



- Personalize your comments. Tell stories. Make a local connection.
- Ask directly for a commitment.
- Listen carefully to their response.
- Thank them for the meeting.
- Follow up with any commitments you make to them.

Tips for Effective Lobbying Meetings

An effective meeting balances:



Listening

Controlling
Agenda

And then...



- If supportive, help them to be a champion. Provide information, resources, intelligence.
- If opposed, move on. Think about ways to neutralize their opposition.
- If undecided, figure out what they need to move – information, public cover, personal testimony, etc.

And remember,



- Whine
- Threaten
- Misrepresent facts
- Malign the opposition
- Personalize differences of opinion
- Burn bridges



Relationships matter.

Long term effective advocacy requires positive, trusting, strategic relationships with elected and appointed officials, staff, the media, organizations and individuals who are prepared to act.

Keep building.