

Monday

Tips for Successful Lobbying

- **Prepare.** Meet internally before your meeting. Choose a spokesperson to speak on behalf of the group. Prioritize your issues. Decide beforehand what you want your desired result to be. Anticipate likely questions and develop good answers.
- **Leave something behind.** Good handouts are critically important: They must be brief, informative and clearly articulate your priorities. The League will provide you with ample handouts for your visit.
- **Do your homework:** Know the legislator's background, committee assignments, major issues and any recent news stories in which he or she has been involved.
- **Don't be intimidated.** Remember, he or she *agreed* to see you. You're a constituent who represents other constituents (credit union members) in the legislator's district. **Remember to bring your Project Zip Code numbers.**
- **Be brief.** Most appointments are scheduled for 15-20 minutes, and lawmakers won't remember you favorably if you fail to appreciate their time constraints.
- **Stick to the issue.** Be clear, specific; stay on track. Leave the legislator with two or three main points.
- **Make your key points** but don't monopolize the conversation. This meeting is a two-way street—an exchange of information. Allow him or her to respond to your presentation and ask questions.
- **Remember that "all politics is local."** Know how your issue affects a legislator's community (i.e., why should he or she care?) If you can emphasize your point by using an example in the legislator's district, do it.
- **Make the "constituent connection."** Show the lawmaker how his or her constituents are helped by the legislation you support or hurt by legislation you oppose.
- **Be prompt, patient and understanding** if a lawmaker is late. If a lawmaker sends a staff person instead, take advantage of the opportunity. Staff members are important to the legislative process. He or she can become a valuable advocate.
- **Be respectful.** If your legislator disagrees with you, do not become argumentative. State politely that you have differing opinions, if that's the case, but that you hope to work together in the future. Always leave the door open to future dialogue.
- **Bring your camera!** Most legislators are very happy to pose for a photo with your group.
- **Say please and thank you.** And don't forget to ask your representative for his or her support before you leave.
- **Follow up.** Send the legislator a follow-up note thanking the lawmaker for taking the time to see you. Reiterate your major point(s) in the letter.

