

Advocacy Tips



GOVERNMENT LIAISON, CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SALT LAKE CITY

How To Advocate Your Position With A Legislator

There are two key principles to remember when lobbying your legislator: Access and Credibility.

Direct access to a legislator is easiest when the legislator knows who you are. Identifying yourself as a constituent gives the legislator at least some initial, and important information about you.

If you continue to contact the legislator, and establish your credibility, you will find access to the legislator becomes simpler.

Credibility requires honesty, a professional demeanor, and knowledge.

Credibility and access are best established and maintained by:

- Knowing your facts.
- Never bluffing—if you don't know the answer to a question, tell the legislator you don't know, but will find out. Make sure you do find out and share the information with the legislator.
- Being brief. Legislators have limited time, don't waste it.
- Advocating, not threatening or intimidating. You can be passionate about an issue, but never threaten.
- Appreciating the hard work they do, even when you disagree. Always thank a legislator for at least taking the time to listen to you.
- Providing written summaries. A legislator may not

have time to consider your issue at the moment. A written reminder of your main points, concerns, etc. is helpful.

- Being visible. Get to know your legislator and keep in contact, even when the legislative session is over.
- Remembering that your voice counts.
- Using email, mail, and phone calls. Legislators receive a lot of all three so use as appropriate.
- Attend candidate forums and get to know them before the election.
- Attend interim and standing committee meetings to hear the debates on the issues and present your point of view.

Writing to Your Legislator

Legislators have limited time and receive a lot of email and mail. Mail is less likely to be read, but can be effective when the legislature is not in session and the number of letters a legislator receives is less.

An effective email or letter:

- Is brief and to the point,
- Focuses on one subject.
- Provides easy to find contact information for you.
- Identifies you as a constituent or representative for a particular group.
- Cites to a specific bill, if possible.
- Is not a form letter the legislator has already
- seen several times.
- States what you want in the first sentence (i.e., I am writing to ask for your vote for/against H.B. 477).
- Maintains a respectful and professional tone.
- Is legible!

For Information on the Utah Legislature:

- GO TO ELECTIONS.UTAH.GOV TO LOCATE YOUR LEGISLATOR
- GO TO LE.UTAH.GOV TO REVIEW BILLS AND THE STATUS OF BILLS
- GO TO LE.UTAH.GOV TO VIEW COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULES AND AGENDAS

For More Information On Catholic Teaching and Political Activity:

- WWW.FAITHFULCITIZENSHIP.ORG
- WWW.USCCB.ORG
- WWW.NETWORKLOBBY.ORG