Effective Lobbying of Indiana General Assembly and State Agencies

Indiana Association for Home and Hospice Care

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Lobbying is not a bad word

- First Amendment!
- Your elected representatives want to hear from you
- You have the right and the responsibility to speak up about issues that are important to you
- Lobbying is the process of promoting change effectively
What’s the issue?

- What do you want to lobby about?
- Find out what the official position is on a particular piece of legislation
Make it personal

• What is your personal story?
• How does the issue affect you?
• Communicating your personal story lets Members of the General Assembly know what is important to their constituents
What to say

- Tell your personal story
- Explain the issue
- List the impacts
- Recommend a **specific** course of action
Know your “ask”

- What specific course of action are you asking for?
- Do you want a Member of the General Assembly to vote for, hold hearings on or cosponsor a bill?
Be Specific

- Be specific – refer to legislation by bill number and name
- Examples
  - “Please vote against SB XXX, regarding sales tax on services.”
  - “Please write a letter to the Chair of the Ways and Means Committee in opposition to SB XXX.”
Do your research

• Before you contact your legislator, do some research

• Where does the Member stand on the issue?
  – Are they already a supporter?
  – Do they need some convincing?

• Gauging interest in a particular issue is an important first step. It will help you shape your call, meeting or letter and tailor it to each office
When to lobby

• There are certain times during the legislative process when lobbying can be particularly effective
  – Before a committee hearing
  – Before a vote
  – While legislation is being drafted
You are the expert

- State agencies, Members of the General Assembly and their staff don’t have time to be experts on all of the issues coming before them
- They rely on constituents, groups and lobbyists to provide them with information
Practice

- Before making any contact, practice what you are going to say
- You want to feel comfortable and natural
- Know the facts
How to make contact

Write a letter

Make a call

Schedule a meeting
Write

• Keep the letter short
• Tell your personal story
• Explain the issue and the desired action and outcome
• Include your full name and address
• Email it as attachment and then mail it
Calling your legislator

• Call the office of your Member
• Ask to speak with their Legislative Assistant, who handles the issue you are calling about
Calling a state agency

- Figure out which agency to lobby
- Call the Agency or Department and ask to speak with the office that handles the issue in question. (IAHHC can help with this.)
During the call

- Have the information in front of you
- Be concise
- State your name and location
- Have a specific request or action
Meet

Meeting face-to-face with your representative or a state agency is the best way to lobby.
Meeting with your Member of the General Assembly

• Call the office of your Member of the General Assembly

• Don’t be discouraged if you don’t get a meeting with the Member – staff members are very knowledgeable and will pass along your message
Meeting with a State Agency

- Call the agency with the person or office that handles your issues or that is involved in the legislation you are calling about.
- Ask to schedule a meeting. Be flexible with your schedule.
At the meeting

- Be early
- Be brief – Get to the point. Stay on message.
- Leave something behind – Give out your card. Have a fact sheet ready that explains the issue and your ask. Bring extra copies.
- The Statehouse is an unpredictable place. Be understanding if the office needs to rescheduled.
Be a source of information

• Members and staff don’t necessarily know about the issue. *You* are the expert.
• Learn about the issue before the meeting
• Be ready to answer questions
• Be prepared to get back to an office on any requests for information
A major part of lobbying is building a relationship with a staffer or an office so that they listen to you and are open to hearing your ideas.

When you call or meet with someone, start to build a relationship with them by being informative and friendly.
Follow up: Be persistent!

- Follow up: Send a thank you card or email to any staffers you met or who helped you get a meeting

- Send any information that was requested in the meeting and ask if any additional information is needed
Use a group effort

• Members of the General Assembly and state agencies are more likely to act if they hear from multiple constituents

• Ask others to write, call or schedule a meeting in support of the issue
Conclusion

- Members of the General Assembly want to hear from their constituents
- Be a source of information
- Build a relationship
- Be persistent
- Don’t be discouraged
- Use a group effort
How Does A Bill Become Law?

• Idea-Bill Drafted
• Filed & Read in Chamber
• Assigned to Committee
• Committee Hear Bill- public testimony
• Committee Vote
• 3rd Reading in Chamber
• To Other Chamber (repeat process)
How Does A Bill Become Law?

- Committee Hearing, 2\textsuperscript{nd} Reading, 3\textsuperscript{rd} Reading
- Back to Original Chamber if Changes
- Governor for Action
- If Author Dissents... to Conference
- After CC both Chambers vote on re-worked Bill
Why Should An Agency Become Involved in the Legislative Process?

- Cost Effective
- Entire Life Will be Affected by the Legislative Process
How Can An Agency Become Involved in the Legislative Process?

- Become a Member of the Association
- Encourage Professionals in Center to Join Professional Societies
  - Power in Numbers
  - Funding for Lobbyist to Track and Influence Legislation
How Can A Agency Become Involved in the Legislative Process?

- Meet With & Go To Fundraisers for Legislators
- Testify when Asked
- Respond to ALERTS from the Association
- “The world is run by those who show up”
How Can An Agency Become Involved in the Legislative Process?

• *Give Money!!*
  – State PAC
  – Individual Contributions to Campaigns
CAMPAIGN SPENDING

- Governor Race
  - Must Raise $20,000-25,000/DAY!
  - Each Candidate Must Raise Approximately $15 million
Useful Online resources

www.in.gov/iga
http://www.in.gov/house_republicans/
http://www.in.gov/house_democrats/
http://www.in.gov/senate_republicans/
http://www.in.gov/senate_democrats/
http://www.in.gov/apps/sos/legislator/search/
Thank you