



The Ten Commandments of Citizen Lobbying

- I. **Know your facts; express them** accurately and positively. Facts and figures matter; so do sources.
 - Never misrepresent your opponent's view.
 - Long-term credibility is more valuable than short-term gain; it helps you win the war even though you may lose the first few battles.
- II. **Know your opposition.** Identify your opposition early.
 - Analyze your opponent's position and attempt to neutralize it. This analysis is as important as your own case.
 - Carefully prepare rebuttals to your opponent's views.
- III. **Correct errors immediately.** When many individuals participate in a lobbying campaign, errors can occur. Anticipate them.
 - Carefully follow policies regarding individuals authorized to speak for the group.
- IV. **Plan, coordinate, and follow-up** on each lobbying contract. Carefully plan your approach to each legislator.
 - Know the role s/he is about to play in the outcome of your issue before you make contact.
 - Keep careful notes about meetings and follow-up with a brief summary letter to the official you visited.
 - Develop networks of friends in the legislature, including staff and other lobbyists, and keep them informed of your activities. Thank those who have helped you.
- V. **Avoid being a zealot.** No one is impressed by fanatics.
 - Credibility is enhanced by a reasoned approach supported by your commitment to the issue.
- VI. **Cultivate your allies;** make sure they do their part. Work in coalition with groups that share your concerns on a particular issue, even though they may differ on another issue.
 - Articulate and agree upon mutual goals, strategies, and tactics.
 - Unlikely allies are the surprise ingredients in many successful political outcomes.

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- VII. **Know the legislative process.** Good intentions are no substitute for knowing how a bill becomes a law.
- Know the key players, the role of leadership, the folkways, customs, and timing of the legislative body.
 - Cultivate and revere those who have developed such expertise in your group. Consult with them often.
- VIII. **Be knowledgeable of Illinois ethic laws.** Lobbying campaigns can be expensive
- IX. **Grow thick skin.** Taking a position can often evoke criticism. Do not take it personally.
- Although lobbying is serious, do not take your self too seriously.
 - Above all, maintain a sense of humor. Lobbying can be fun.
- X. **Win.** Dedicate yourself to winning. Dream of it, plan for it.
- Believe in yourself, your group, and your issue. This is what give you power as a citizen lobbyist.
 - Share the credit with everyone who helped.
 - Be gracious to your opponents. They may be your allies on another issue.