

ADVOCACY 101



- **REMEMBER, YOUR VOICE MAKES A DIFFERENCE.**

Policy makers would rather hear from you as their constituent, than a paid lobbyist.

- **TAKE EVERY OPPORTUNITY** that presents itself to meet with your state and local elected official(s). Successful advocacy is built on cultivating relationships with policy makers.

- **IDENTIFY** the chairs and members of your state legislature committees that deal with occupational licensing. Invite them to participate in a chapter meeting or conference call.

- **AVOID** overly technical terms in your talking points. Keep them concise and simple. Design them as though you will only have 40 seconds to deliver them to a policy maker as she or he is rushing to her or his next meeting. If they want more extensive information, they will ask for it.

- **DON'T FEEL SHORT-CHANGED** or insulted if you end up meeting with a legislative aide instead of the elected official. Policy makers rely heavily on the advice and counsel of their legislative staff. Treat the aide as though you were meeting with the elected official.

- **DON'T BE AFRAID TO ADMIT** you don't know the answer to a question. Promise to get the information to the policy maker as soon as possible (and deliver).

- **DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK** the policy maker for advice or suggestions about pursuing your particular public policy issue goal. He or she may offer to help open some doors or make some introductions to assist you in moving toward your goal. At the very least, he or she should have some helpful insight.

- **ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN** an ongoing relationship with your officials. Don't just reach out to them when you want something or need help. It is better to have a relationship based on trust as opposed one based solely on need when it comes to public policy.

- **DON'T ARGUE** with a policy maker even when you disagree. Keep your responses cordial. Your message will get lost if it is part of an argumentative discussion or interaction.

- **BE NON-PARTISAN** with your message. This will allow you to work with all policy makers – no matter who the majority party is.

- **DON'T OVERLOOK** newly elected officials. While they may not have committee positions of power now, take time to introduce yourself and get to know them. They will remember and appreciate that as they move up the ladder in the political hierarchy.

- **DON'T FORGET** to say, "Thank You." Send a note or an email after the meeting thanking the elected official for her or his time.

- **MAKE SURE** any information you leave behind is not more than one page. Elected officials and their aides often have limited time and have to scan materials very quickly. Less is more!

- **DON'T ASSUME** elected officials know about your industry. Assume they know nothing about what you do. It is up to you to educate them.

- **LET ASET KNOW** if an elected official is your friend OR neighbor OR relative OR co-worker, so we can help strategize the best approach to the policy initiative.

- **REMEMBER**, a successful advocacy campaign is a long-haul proposition. It is not designed for instant gratification.