

# LOBBYING FOR THE WE THE PEOPLE AMENDMENT

MOVE TO AMEND LOBBYING SKILLS CONFERENCE CALL  
TUESDAY, JULY 26, 2016

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MOVE TO AMEND COALITION  
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Thank you for developing your lobbying skills to enable you to effectively petition your member of Congress, state legislator, or local public official as a citizen lobbyist! Lobbying is one of the most valuable skills available to us as we advocate for the We the People Amendment. Lobbying is a tactic of petition as opposed to tactics of confrontation, such as protest rallies, used to influence elected and appointed decision makers. To be successful, the lobbyist must work to build a relationship with the decision maker.

There are a number of goals in lobbying: to educate, to gather intelligence about information being presented by our adversaries, to find out how the decision maker stands on our issue, what are areas of concern to that person, and what additional information will be necessary to persuade the person to do what we want.

## SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES USEFUL IN LOBBYING:

1. The ability to deal with the law maker with some degree of mutual respect.
2. Physical and mental stamina; an ability to handle success and disappointment; to be persistent.
3. The ability to compromise and yet to understand the Move to Amend Coalition's bottom line.
4. The ability to understand details, yet to grasp the big picture.
5. A good personality, upbeat yet having a depth of commitment and insight.
6. The ability to voice one's position clearly and concisely both verbally and in writing.
7. An understanding of the culture, history, and demographics of the people and geographic area served by the member.
8. Finally, citizen lobbying requires credibility and integrity. Never, ever lie.

## PREPARATION FOR LOBBYING:

1. Learn all you can about your legislator, her/his educational background, personality, family members, religious affiliation, organizational memberships, employment history, contacts, contributors, supporters and areas of potential common ground.
2. Learn about your legislator's district (see The Almanac of American Politics, 2016, Cohen). Learn by reading and talking to people within the district. Learn about your congressperson's voting record (see various voting scorecards).
3. Learn about your decision maker's aides (see Congressional Yellow Book)
4. Learn about the issue.

#### HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR PERSONAL VISIT WITH YOUR DECISION MAKER:

1. Get an appointment.
2. Don't be intimidated – you probably know more about the subject than the legislator does – project confidence.
3. Show that you are friendly by, if possible, complimenting something she or he has done.
4. Show that you are serious by providing a concise statement about the Amendment, including its history, and how it affects you and the United States.
5. Be a good listener.
6. Don't let the legislator avoid taking a stand; press for a commitment.
7. Don't argue or threaten.
8. If you don't know the answer to a question say, “I don't know, but I will find out and report back to you”.
9. Maintain your sense of humor. It can serve you well.
10. Leave briefing material (usually one page) outlining a history of the issue, your position, and what you want the decision maker to do.
11. Write a follow-up letter thanking the legislator for the meeting.

#### CONSIDERATIONS WHEN ORGANIZING A DELEGATION TO MEET WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR:

1. Try to make your appointment as soon as it is determined to be advisable. Don't wait until the last minute.
2. Keep your delegation small (3 or 4 people at most).
3. Have a pre-meeting meeting of the delegation to determine who will say what (including who will “make the ask”). Have a clear and concise message.
4. Have a groomed appearance that projects self-respect.
5. During the actual visit, consider the following: project a low-key, one-on-one conversational tone; engage in 5 minutes of small talk; if possible, comment on something positive the congressperson has done; take no more than 10 minutes to state your case; try to get a commitment; and leave a fact sheet as you leave.
6. Prepare a report about the visit and send it to Move to Amend headquarters.

Good luck!

TIPS ON WRITING LETTERS TO YOUR DECISION MAKER:

1. Make the letter one page or less, on one subject, in your own words.
2. Refer to a bill by its number, and title if known.
3. Tell the legislator what you want done and how it will affect the nation.
4. Ask for the decision maker to take some position and to do something.
5. If there is a positive legislative history, cite the voting record of the legislator.
6. Write as a private citizen unless you're writing as a representative of your Move to Amend Coalition affiliate.
7. Write a hand-written letter rather than sending a form letter or postcard.
8. Don't be a pen pal – don't write on every possible issue.
9. Follow up with a response to any reply from the legislator.
10. Spell his or her name correctly.
11. Don't threaten, demand, or apologize.