

LOBBYING TIPS

1. **Schedule an appointment with your state legislators.** If you do not know who your state representative and senator are, call the Massachusetts Secretary of State's office at 1-800-462-VOTE (617-727-7030 in Boston) or look it up online at www.wheredoivotema.com.
2. **Take some time to prepare.** Your meeting may be as short as 10 - 15 minutes, so review the key points you want to get across. It's fine to use notes to help stay on track.
3. **Be prompt and patient.** Arrive on time, but be patient if you must wait. Legislators have busy schedules and cannot control meetings or legislative sessions that run overtime.
4. **Be polite.** Begin your comments by thanking the legislator or staff member for meeting with you. Staying positive creates a great image.
5. **Be brief, be positive.** If you will be meeting in a group, one person should act as the spokesperson to present the group's message. The spokesperson should give the legislator a packet of written materials and leave his or her name and address so the legislator can ask follow-up questions afterwards. Others in the group should introduce themselves and, if time permits, explain very briefly (one or two sentences) how they are personally affected.
6. **Anticipate tough arguments and questions.** Be prepared to answer questions. Make a good case, but don't exaggerate. If you don't know the answer to a question, don't worry. After the meeting, let Erin Spencer (pres@massvta.org) know so we can follow up with the legislator.
7. **Ask for your legislator's viewpoint.** Then listen carefully to his or her answer. Concentrate on what he or she says. Don't interrupt. Ask questions if necessary. Offer to supply additional information -- part of your effort is to educate.
8. **Don't argue.** If the legislator disagrees with you, stay calm. Once you've disagreed and stated why, it won't help to argue. Instead, say something like, "I see that we disagree on this point, Representative (or Senator, but I appreciate your willingness to consider my views." Never threaten, such as by saying "I'll never vote for you."
9. **Stick to the point.** Do not ask the legislator for help with a particular case. Do not bring up other legislative issues during this appointment.
10. **Don't underestimate the importance of legislative staff.** They may be the ones doing all the follow-up work on the issue after the meeting, so you'll want to convince them, too!
11. **Finally, thank the legislator and his or her staff at the end of the meeting.**