# TEN PRINCIPLES OF LOBBYING

### Do Your Homework

Learn as much as you can about the issue you want to address by being very clear about how it affects you and about the legislators that are the key decision makers on your issue. When contacting legislators, always anticipate the questions you will be asked in order to readily answer the question.

### Be Patient and Flexible

The state legislative process moves at a rapid pace. Be prepared to adapt to schedule and political changes at a moment's notice and don't appear to be frustrated with legislators you are trying to influence.

### Tell the Truth

Legislators will be relying on your for accurate information. If you are dishonest, you will never regain your credibility with legislators once you lose it. If you don't know the answer to a question, say so. If you promise to find an answer to a question you were asked, follow-through quickly with good information.

## Keep it Simple

**Keep your request simple** by thinking ahead about what you want and why you want it. Legislators and their staff are busy people and will appreciate a concise summary of your request.

### Take Your Friends Where You Find Them

Know who your friends are and work with them. In politics, a friend is someone who will help you when you need help-- whether they are a Democrat or Republican, liberal or conservative. Never "burn your bridges", as your opponent today may be your ally tomorrow.

## **Know Your Opponents**

Take your time to know who will be opposing your position and don't waste time trying to convince those who are publicly opposed to your position. Your time is better spent keeping the votes you have and swaying undecided votes. It is very important to keep lines of communication open with your opponents in order to be open for possible compromises.

# Think Big, But Be Realistic

Always ask for more than you think you can get understanding that the legislative process is one of compromise. Be prepared to give up something without hurting the intent of your request. You can do this by prioritizing and deciding what is most important to you, in advance of your request, and be willing to compromise on everything else.

### **Build Coalitions**

You can be more effective working from a united front. Find groups and individuals who agree with you on an issue and work with them. Don't expect them to agree with you on every issue or expect the coalition to last forever. And, never argue over who gets credit. It is more important to get your request approved.

#### Work at the Local Level

**Legislators pay most attention to their constituents.** Sometimes you can affect the key decision-makers directly, but more often it is best done through local contacts with legislators, media and allies.

# And, Always Thank the People Who Help You!