

## TIPS FOR APPROACHING LEGISLATORS

- Legislators have short attention spans.
- Legislators all have egos and ego needs.
- Information is not the only basis by which legislative decisions are made. They may want to have data on the costs as well as the benefits of what you propose. They will be influenced by who is for the bill. Their re-election is an important consideration always.
- Legislators are generalists. Don't assume they know anything about your area.
- Learn the rules of the assembly.
- Evaluate not only your legislative supporters, but also your legislative opponents.
- Build up your expertise as an information source. Legislators seek information and are grateful if they find reliable sources.
- Don't wait for legislators to come to you. You go to them.
- Be sure your information is accurate and credible. Know your stuff.
- Be prepared for hostile reactions by some legislators, but don't return hostility with hostility.
- Avoid standardized letters. Personalized letters are much more effective. If a group of individuals all plan to write, they can all make the same points, but let it be in different words for each.
- Get the name right. Don't misspell it. Learn how to properly pronounce it.
- Focus on the legislators of your own district.
- Talk to lots of people—clerks, staff, and other personnel—not just legislators.
- If you succeed, thank the legislators.
- If your bill passes, keep lobbying. Opponents may lobby the executive branch for a veto or may lobby the other house.
- Remember, miracles do happen.