

Advocacy Do's & Don'ts!

Advocacy Do's:

- Form relationships! Don't wait until you need something to contact policy-makers.
- Be open to talking to legislative staff.
- Be informed! Know the issue, the system and the key players.
- Give personal examples! They are incredibly powerful.
- Be honest! Do not exaggerate. It's ok to admit that you don't know something and that you'll get back to the legislator with more information later.
- Be concise! Keep all visits, calls, testimonies brief and to the point.
- Practice, practice, practice! Explain your opinion & make your case to family, friends & colleagues before you make your case to policymakers.
- Seek out new partnerships & alliances with others who share your views.
- Be specific! Know what you want your legislator to do, and ask for it!
- Stay active! Maintain communication with policymakers.
- Be patient, persistent and positive.

Advocacy Don'ts:

- Wait until you need something to contact policymakers.
- Ignore or be disrespectful to legislative staff.
- Exaggerate.
- Send form letters or emails—lots and lots of 'em.
- Make threats.
- Expect the impossible or insist on immediate action.
- Pretend to speak for everyone.
- Bury them with paper.
- Don't argue—if it's clear the policymaker will not support your position, just give them the facts and ask him or her to consider your viewpoint. Keep the lines of communication open and think of ways to get other constituents to continue to talk to the legislator about that issue.
- **Don't give up!**