

Ten Informal Rules of Advocacy

1. Consider yourself an information source. Legislators have limited time, staff and interest in any one issue. They can't be as informed as they might like on all issues- or the ones that concern you. You can fill the information gap.
2. Make the legislature aware of any personal connection you may have. No matter how insignificant you may feel it is, if you have any friends, relatives, and/or other colleagues in common, **MAKE THAT KNOWN.**
3. Tell the truth. There is no faster way to lose your credibility than to give false or misleading information to a legislator.
4. Know who is on your side. It is helpful for a legislator to know what other groups, individuals, state agencies and/or legislators are working with you on an issue.
5. Know your opposition. Anticipate who the opposition will be. Tell the legislator what the opposition's arguments are likely to be and provide him/her with answers and rebuttals to those arguments.
6. Don't be afraid to admit you don't know something. If a legislator wants information you don't have or asks something you don't know, acknowledge that and then offer to get the information.
7. Be specific about what you are looking for. If you want a vote, information, answer to a question- whatever it is- make sure you ask for it directly and get an answer.
8. Follow up. It is very important to find out if your legislators did what they said they would do. It is also very important that you thank them or ask for an explanation as to why they did not vote as you would have liked them to.
9. Don't burn any bridges. It is easy to get very emotional over issues you feel strongly about. Be sure that no matter how difficult your conversation might be, you leave on good enough terms that you can go back to that legislator later. Remember that your strongest opponent on one issue may be your strongest ally on another.
10. **REMEMBER-YOU ARE THE BOSS!!**

From the Maine Women's Lobby "Ten Informal Rules for Lobbying"