



# Lobbying “Dos” and “Don’ts”

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<http://www.socialworkers.org/advocacy/grassroots/toolkit/dosDonts.asp>

## DO

1. Do learn Members’ committee assignments and where their specialties lie.
2. Do present the need for what you’re asking the Member of Congress to do. Use data or cases you know.
3. Do relate situations in his/her home state or district.
4. Do ask the Representative’s or Senator’s position and why.
5. Do—in case of voting records—ask why he/she voted a particular way.
6. Do show openness to the knowledge of counterarguments and respond to them.
7. Do admit you don’t know. Offer to try to find out the answer and send information back to the office.
8. Do spend time with Members whose position is against yours. You can lessen the intensity of the opposition and perhaps change it.
9. Do spend time in developing relationships with Congressional staff.
10. Do thank them for stands the Member has taken which you support.

## DON’T

1. Don’t overload a Congressional visit with too many issues.
2. Don’t confront, threaten, pressure or beg.
3. Don’t be argumentative. Speak with calmness and commitment so as not to put him/her on the defensive.
4. Don’t overstate the case. Members are very busy and you’re apt to lose their attention if you are too wordy.
5. Don’t expect Members of Congress to be specialists. Their schedules and workloads tend to make them generalists.
6. Don’t be put off by smokescreens or long-winded answers. Bring the Members back to the point. Maintain control of the meetings.
7. Don’t make promises you can’t deliver.
8. Don’t be afraid to take a stand on the issues.
9. Don’t shy away from meetings with legislators with known views opposite your own.
10. Don’t be offended if a legislator is unable to meet and requests that you meet with his/her staff.

### Nonprofits and Lobbying: State Laws

There may be specific registration and reporting requirements for lobbying activities in your state. Advocates should check with their state’s appropriate agency for such information.

The Alliance for Justice currently has state-specific lobbying disclosure information. Go to

<http://www.afj.org/for-nonprofits-foundations/state-resources/>