



Maine Women's Lobby

THE VOICE OF MAINE WOMEN

P.O. Box 15
Hallowell, Maine 04347
207.622.0851
Fax 207.621.2551
info@mainewomen.org
www.mainewomen.org
www.mainewomen.org

THE TEN INFORMAL RULES OF LOBBYING or...

Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Lobbying but Never Thought to Ask

1. **Consider yourself an information source.**
Legislators have limited time, staff, and interest on 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. **Tell the truth.**
There is no faster way to lose your credibility than to give misleading information to a legislator.
3. **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.
4. **Know the opposition.**
Anticipate who the opposition will be—organized or individual. Tell the legislator what their arguments are likely to be and provide them with answers and rebuttals.
5. **Make the legislator 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, let them know! Our legislative process is very informal. While a personal connection may make no difference in your effectiveness—it may make the difference.
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 they are looking for.
7. **Be specific about what you are looking for.**
If you want a vote, information, answers to a question—whatever it is—make sure you ask for it directly and get an answer.
8. **Follow up.**
Find out if your legislator did what she/he said they would. Then, thank them or ask for an explanation as to why they did not vote as they said they would.
9. **Don't burn any bridges.**
It is very easy to get emotional over issues you feel very strongly about. However, be sure that no matter what a legislator's decision on an issue, you end the conversation on good enough terms that you can go back to them. Remember that your strongest opponent on one issue may be your strongest ally on another.
10. **REMEMBER YOU ARE THE BOSS!**
Your tax money pays legislators' salaries, pays for the paper they write on, the phone they call you on. **YOU** are the employer and they are the employees. You should be courteous, but don't be intimidated. They are responsible to you and nine out of ten, legislators are grateful for your input.