

General Rules for Effective Lobbying

- Always introduce yourself as a member of Kentucky Equality Federation and/or Bluegrass Fairness of Central Kentucky. A simple "May I have a few minutes of your time?" will set the stage if you have not scheduled an appointment.
- Be gracious to the legislator's receptionist and/or aide. A rude tone will affect your relationship with all in the office, including the legislator. Treat all staff with respect.
- Listen carefully to what the Senator or Representative is saying and write notes after the conversation so you do not forget important points.
 - **NOTE:** You should at all times refer to the person by their official title. For the purposes of this example, we will assume the person you are speaking to has the last name "Adams." **Never** call an elected official by their first name!
 - "Thank you for seeing me Representative Adams."
 - "Good afternoon Senator Adams."
- **Get down to business quickly.** Be brief, be direct, be simple and, above all, be accurate. Do not philosophize. Know your topic and be prepared for questions. Remember that your legislator hears many viewpoints. You want him/her to remember yours, so be factual.
- Be friendly, be persuasive, be professional, and be courteous. **Do not argue or belabor the point.** Your role is to explain, inform and persuade. **Do not threaten or attack.**
- **Never make up a position for the organization you are representing, or give an answer to a question that you are not familiar with. The appropriate response is "I'll get back to you with the answer." Remember, the legislator is depending on you to give accurate information, not guess.**
- Think of the hard questions beforehand and be prepared.
- Try to get a commitment if you can (to oppose or sponsor a law being considered). If the legislator refuses to give it to you, ask that he/she get back with you before taking a position against you or say that you will check back before a position or vote is taken.
- **Keep in mind that the legislator may try to lobby you.** This is especially true if the legislator senses that there is not a firm commitment on the part of Kentucky Equality Federation and/or Bluegrass Fairness of Central Kentucky to our issues. **This will hurt our lobby effort.**
- When finishing the conversation, always thank the legislator for his/her time. If he/she has asked for follow-up information, quickly give it to an officer of Kentucky Equality Federation and/or Bluegrass Fairness of Central Kentucky.
- Don't give up if you are not successful the first time. In fact, many times success is in just making the initial contact. Communications established through discussion can aid future lobbying efforts.
- Keep in mind that many or most of the legislators have little or no direct knowledge or experience with LGBT issues or the bills that could affect the LGBT community.
- **Though your appointment is with the legislator, due to his/her busy schedule, last minute changes may result in meeting with the legislator's aide. Do not be discouraged but cordially accommodate the change and make your presentation to the aide. Legislators' aides are very knowledgeable about the issues as it is their job to keep the legislator informed. They are very influential with their legislator and can advocate our point of view.**