



Strategies for Collaborating with Your Elected Officials

2010 Inaugural Georgia Bike Summit

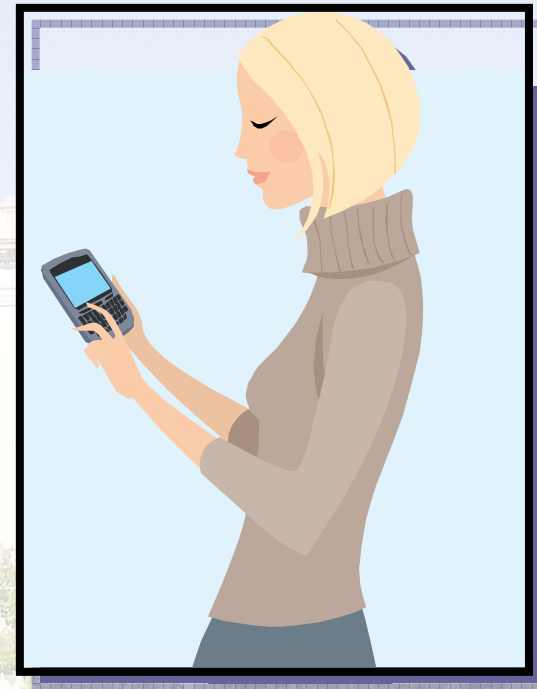
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Introduction

- Education
- Background
- Experience
- Lobbying 101





Know Before You Go

- Individuals and organizations have the right to participate in the legislative process
- State government, its branches and agencies exist to serve the people
 - It affects every aspect of our lives
 - It responds to the wishes of the people
 - Silence is not golden



Keep In Mind

- As an American citizen, you CAN:
 - Make campaign contributions
 - Host a 'meet and greet' with a candidate in your home
 - Volunteer in a candidate's campaign



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Keys to Effective Advocacy

- Know your issues and always be honest
- The legislature is the ultimate abstract environment, so keep your issue real
- Communication with elected officials should be brief, direct, early, frequent and interactive



● ● ● | Keys to Effective Advocacy

- Sometimes the most effective and influential advocates are a legislator's family, friends and other local elected officials
- Good advocacy is non-partisan
- One constituent contact is twice as valuable as a non-constituent contact



- ● ● | Keys to Effective Advocacy

- Legislators are not magicians, nor are they omniscient

- Never underestimate the minority party

- Don't pester, never offend



Resources

- www.votesmart.org
- www.sos.ga.gov
- www.legis.ga.gov
- www.gban.org

- At Home

- www.georgia.gov
- Correspondence
 - Letters
 - Email
 - Phone
- District Offices
- Volunteer

- At The Capitol

- Clerk's Offices
- Legislative Offices
- Committee Meetings

● ● ● | Tools and Tactics

○ Educate

- Invite your local elected officials for a tour of your organization or business
- Meet with elected officials in their district offices

○ Exhibit

- Invite elected officials to attend local events
- Request elected officials to speak at events
- Invite them to participate in a meeting of your board of directors or membership





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Communication Guidelines

- Writing, emailing, calling and meeting in person are all effective ways of getting your message across to elected officials
 - It doesn't take many 'hits' on a topic to get a legislator's attention
 - Elected officials are more likely to take notice when the messages come from constituents
 - Check government websites for biographies and contact information of your elected officials
 - Write or contact the entire committee who is handling your issue or legislation



Written Communication



- Always

- Use the correct and formal address and salutation
- Write or type clearly
- Include your return address
- Use your own words and stationery
- Keep your message focused
- Be brief, but thorough
- Make it personal and use specific examples
- Be considerate, but be persistent
- Thank them for their time and attention

- Never

- Use a negative, condescending, threatening or intimidating tone



- ● ● | Telephone Communication

- Always

- Ask to speak directly with the legislator or their aide/staff who is handling your issue
- Be prepared with your message and BE BRIEF
- Leave your full name, address and telephone number
- Follow up your phone call with a note thanking them for their time, a summary of your position and any additional resources if they have been requested

- Never

- Bluff or fabricate. If you do not have an answer say that you will get back to them and then provide the appropriate follow-up



Face to Face Communication

○ Always

- Call ahead to schedule an appointment
- Arrive on time
- Be articulate
- Be direct
- Use supporting materials if available
- Write a thank you letter

○ Never

- Show up unannounced
- Assail those who may oppose your issue



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Questions?

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