



Lobby Guide

NOW Recommendations

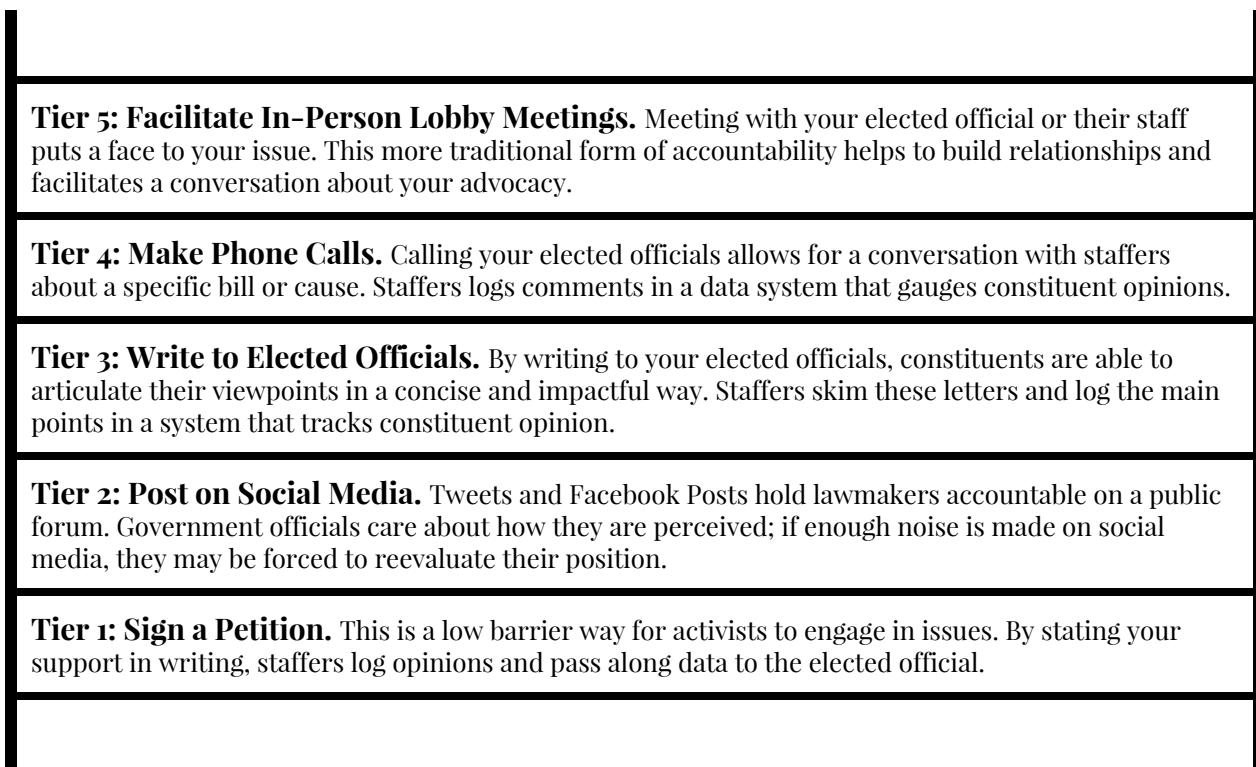


What is Lobbying?

Lobbying is any act that seeks to hold a group, government official, or elected representative accountable. **Speaking truth to power allows for individuals to become stakeholders in the lawmaking process.** Whether on a local, state, or federal level, if your group wants to shape legislative change, lobbying is the most effective tool in your arsenal.

Ladder of Engagement:

The ladder of engagement illustrates tiers of lobbying. This visual gauges which method of lobbying is most effective for your group.



The ABCs of Effective Lobbying:

Accurate

- All information given to staffers must be factually correct, this is important in terms of legitimacy and ethics.
 - If you are not aware of a fact or the answer to a question, let the staffer know and follow up after the meeting.

Brief

- Staffers typically have packed schedules. They are taking time out of their days to have a conversation with you, make sure that your talking points are brief and focused.



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Courteous

- Though you might not always agree with a staffer or elected official, it is important to remain professional; you might be able to lean on this connection to make progress on another initiative.

Other Tips to Keep in Mind:

- **Numbers Make a Difference.** Engage as many activists as possible in your lobby initiatives, the more individuals that are involved in your lobby actions, the more impactful
- **Keep Lobby Advocacy within your State or Represented Region.** Though it might seem impactful to reach out to Senators and Representatives from other districts or states, it is not within their purview to record opinions from individuals who are not their constituents.
- **Stay focused on One or Two Issues.** Staffers will most likely only take time to follow up or report the main points. In order to make an impact, focus and narrow your lobby effort on one to two issues.
- **Be Clear About What You Want: Make an Ask.** Clearly relay exactly what you want your elected official to do after the meeting (Vote YES on SB oooo).

Breaking Down Lobby Myths:

- **Meeting with elected officials or their staff is not impactful.** Though expecting direct and immediate change from lobbying might not be realistic, over time your actions stand to make a difference. When lobbying, think of your role as an **educator** and a **relationship builder**, supporting elected officials in their role of understanding constituent views of policy impact.
- **Lobbying is unethical and requires a highly funded operation.** Though constituents might think of lobbying as mechanism of highly funded special interest groups, **grassroots lobbying amplifies** voices and centers constituent opinion in the policy making process.
- **Lobby meetings are intimidating.** Though it can be nerve-wracking to speak truth to power, it is a large part of staffers' jobs to meet with constituents. Staffers have thousands of bills and memos that cross their desks, they rely on you as issue experts to narrow this pile and better understand the issues.
- **Lobbying has to take place in Washington D.C.** Though lobby meetings often take place on Capitol Hill, elected officials maintain offices across their represented region. Meeting with staffers in their local office puts a face and a name to issues impacting local constituencies.