



Lobbying 101

A Guide to
Grassroots Activism



What is Lobbying?

Definition of Lobby (noun)

1. an entrance hall, corridor, or vestibule in a public building, such as the lobby of the **Willard Hotel**, pictured at right circa 1900.
2. a group of persons who conduct a campaign to influence members of a **legislature** to vote in a certain way.
3. The Clerk of the House and the IRS have much more extensive definitions of #2 above that include attempting to influence **regulatory** outcomes as well as legislative ones.



Who Lobbies?

- Power lobbying
 - Former Members of Congress for hire.
 - Political Fundraisers for hire.
 - High-priced Lawyers for hire.
 - Power Lobbyists will have to register with the U.S. House and Senate, and many state legislatures.



Who Lobbies?

- Issue Lobbying
 - Trade Associations, NGOs, & corporations.
 - Special interests like the NRA or NARAL
 - Requires registration with the U.S. House and Senate and many state legislatures.
 - Issue lobbyists are more likely to get involved in regulatory outcomes.
 - Organizations also raise big money through PACs.



Who Lobbies?

We, the people do.

Grassroots lobbying is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution:



Who Lobbies?

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.



Why Lobby?

- Is citizen lobbying effective?
 - Short Answer: YES!
- What can I accomplish?
 - Gain information about issues and positions
 - Educate a government official about something important
 - Create an atmosphere for compromise
 - Change a vote.



Where to Lobby?

- In Washington
- In the district office
- In the state capital
- At town halls
- At fundraisers
- **Any time you meet face-to-face with a legislator (or a regulator)**



When to Lobby?

- How laws are made...
 - A legislator sees a problem, or the party leadership has a problem to solve.
 - A bill is developed and introduced in one or more chambers by co-sponsors.
 - The bill is referred to committee(s).
 - The committee(s) hold hearings.
 - The committee(s) holds “mark ups.”



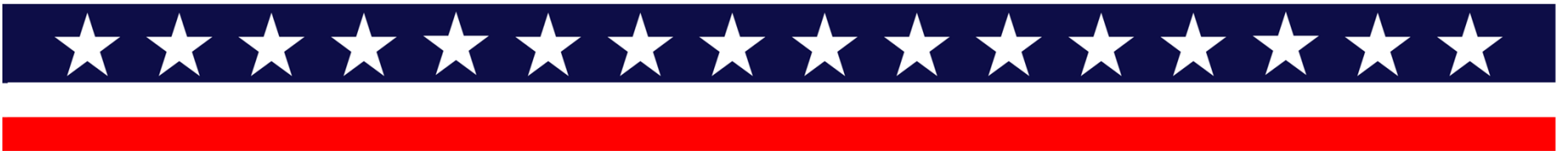
When to Lobby?

- How laws are made (continued.)
 - The Committee votes on the bill.
 - The Bill comes to the floor for a vote. (Different rules apply depending on the legislature.)
 - This process is repeated in the other house.
 - Differences between the upper and lower houses are ironed out in conference.



When to Lobby?

- How laws are made (continued).
 - The conference version of the bill is voted on.
 - If it's passed, it goes to the executive for signature. The executive can veto the bill. In some states the executive can veto line items in the bill.
 - If the bill is vetoed an override vote will be taken.



Lobbying 101- Planning

- Make sure you know what you are asking for, and that you are going to lobby at the appropriate time. For instance it's a good time to lobby when:
 - You want a legislator to introduce a bill.
 - A bill is having a committee hearing.
 - A bill is having a markup.
 - a bill is coming to the floor for a vote.



Lobbying 101 - Planning

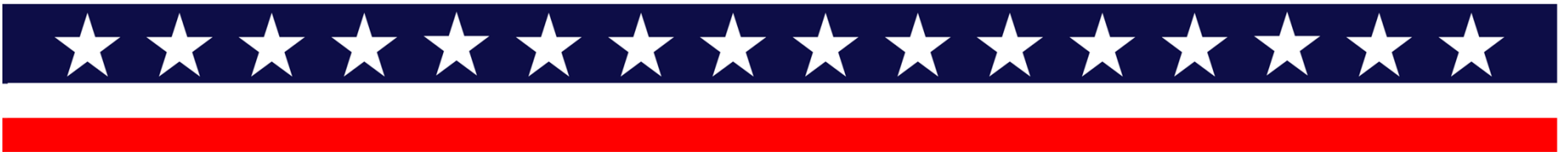
- Call your legislator's office and make an appointment
 - Try to get your meeting with the legislator.
 - Tip: If you are a constituent, contact the MC's scheduler to set up your appointment.
 - Don't show up and expect to be seen.



Lobbying 101- Planning

Before you go, develop a **one-page** leave-behind document.

- Should contain the main factual talking points.
 - You may have developed these yourself, or
 - You may have gotten them from the main organizations advocating on the issue.
- Should be one side of one page only and contain your contact information.



Lobbying 101-Meeting

- Show up on time for your appointment wearing a lapel button advertising your issue.



Lobbying 101-Meeting

- Don't be surprised if you have to wait to see the MC, or if your meeting ends up being with staff.
 - Tip: Don't carry a sign to a one-on-one meeting with a MC.
 - Tip: Dress appropriately.
 - Tip: No shouting or profanity



Lobbying 101 - Meeting

- Don't read from your one-pager, that's strictly a "leave-behind."
- Instead, tell your own story.
 - A brief, *emotionally engaging* story is worth 10,000 one-pagers! Tell the MC how a particular bill will affect you personally.
- Be brief. Don't expect more than 15 minutes.



Lobbying 101- Followup

- If staff or the MC has asked for additional information, be sure to send it as quickly as you can.
- Even if the MC or staff has not asked for additional information, it's still a good idea to follow up with a thank you note.



Lobbying 101- Summary



SEIU Lobbyists 2009

Grassroots lobbying is about growing a movement that brings change. . .



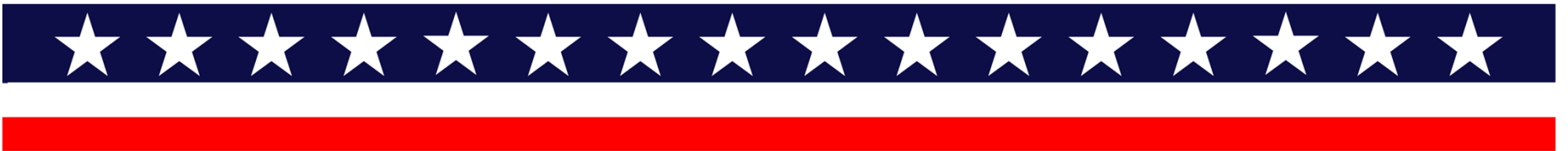
Helpful Stuff

- Indivisible Movement Guide:
<https://www.indivisibleguide.com/>
- The U.S. Capitol switchboard number is:
202-224-3121.
- Find your federal legislator:
<http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>



Helpful Stuff

- Federal Bill Status / Congressional Record:
 - <https://www.congress.gov/>
- Virginia Bill Status:
 - <https://lis.virginia.gov/>



Contact Information

- Mary Alexander
mary@mkalexander.com
Cell: 202-257-5377
- Robin Lanier
Alliance Management Group
rwl@alliancemg.com
202-744-6720

