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NC Conservation Network

Tip Sheet #1: Lobbying

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Taken from: The "Lobbying: How to & hands on" session at our 2010 Annual Conference' led by Meredith Emmett of Third Space Studio, Gina Upchurch of Senior PharmAssist, and Betsy Vetter of American Heart Association.

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Lobbying

In this Tip Sheet you will learn lobbying tips taught by seasoned experts on determining your target(s), building your power, and likely challenges you will face.

Tips for lobbying

Tip #1: Determine your target(s)

1. Include all three sectors (legislative, executive, and judicial) when possible and brainstorm a list of all of your potential partners with a wide angle lens.
2. Engage the unelected public officials, who create regulations and manage the day-to-day (General Assembly staff, assistants, etc.). They are potential inside advocates.
3. Think not only about the General Assembly, but also the Executive branch.

Tip #2: Know your stuff.

1. Be accurate and compelling.
 - a. Know your stuff (be prepared); be a reference.
 - b. Don't stretch the facts.
 - c. Demonstrate passion and positive energy.
 - d. Admit if you don't know something...and then learn and share it.
 - e. Simplify the facts and provide short fact sheets.
 - f. Make the connection between your action/legislation and the problem it fixes.
 - g. Use outside validity/corroboration.
2. Here's how best to talk about your issue:
Explain problem -> tell a story -> provide your easy-to-fix solution.

Tip #3: Build your power.

1. Help create "Hero Opportunities" and provide public recognition – right person at the right time with the right information.
2. Use strong partnerships to help keep the lobbying on track and under pressure.
3. Let your decision makers know that you are coalescing and building your base.
4. Activate your target legislator's constituents if possible.

Tip #4: Know the challenges.

1. Compromise is difficult and sometimes a necessary evil.
2. Most coalition members are overwhelmed already with their own priorities.
3. We usually act out of our own self-interest and so keeping everyone on the same track can be difficult.

4. Decision-makers may make different decisions when watched by the affected constituency.

Tip #5: **Ten to Remember**. Here is Betsy Vetter's top ten list.

1. Grassroots is Power
2. Media can steal the show
3. Patience is a virtue
4. Relationships Rule
5. Bi-partisan is beautiful
6. Coalitions are critical – Doing it alone is hard
7. Messaging MUST be consistent
8. Champions make the deal
9. Integrity – don't compromise it
10. Celebrate Successes

Resources:

Betsy Vetter, American Heart Association, betsy.vetter@heart.org
Gina Upchurch, Senior PharmAssist, gina@seniorpharmassist.org

Future Tip Sheet Ideas?

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