

# Effective Lobbying of Indiana General Assembly and State Agencies

## Indiana Association for Home and Hospice Care

Lou Belch  
The Corydon Group, LLC  
loubelch@thecorydongroup.com



# Lobbying is not a bad word

- First Amendment!
- Your elected representatives want to hear from you
- You have the right and the responsibility to speak up about issues that are important to you
- Lobbying is the process of promoting change effectively



# What's the issue?

- What do you want to lobby about?
- Find out what the official position is on a particular piece of legislation



# Make it personal

- What is your personal story?
- How does the issue affect you?
- Communicating your personal story lets Members of the General Assembly know what is important to their constituents



# What to say

- Tell your personal story
- Explain the issue
- List the impacts
- Recommend a specific course of action



# Know your "ask"

- What specific course of action are you asking for?
- Do you want a Member of the General Assembly to vote for, hold hearings on or cosponsor a bill?



# Be Specific

- Be specific – refer to legislation by bill number and name
- Examples
  - “Please vote against SB XXX, regarding sales tax on services.”
  - “Please write a letter to the Chair of the Ways and Means Committee in opposition to SB XXX.”



# Do your research

- Before you contact your legislator, do some research
- Where does the Member stand on the issue?
  - Are they already a supporter?
  - Do they need some convincing?
- Gauging interest in a particular issue is an important first step. It will help you shape your call, meeting or letter and tailor it to each office





# When to lobby

- There are certain times during the legislative process when lobbying can be particularly effective
  - Before a committee hearing
  - Before a vote
  - While legislation is being drafted



# You are the expert

- State agencies, Members of the General Assembly and their staff don't have time to be experts on all of the issues coming before them
- They rely on constituents, groups and lobbyists to provide them with information



# Practice

- Before making any contact, practice what you are going to say
- You want to feel comfortable and natural
- Know the facts



# How to make contact

**Write a letter**

**Make a call**

**Schedule a meeting**



# Write

- Keep the letter short
- Tell your personal story
- Explain the issue and the desired action and outcome
- Include your full name and address
- Email it as attachment and then mail it



# Calling your legislator

- Call the office of your Member
- Ask to speak with their Legislative Assistant, who handles the issue you are calling about



# Calling a state agency

- Figure out which agency to lobby
- Call the Agency or Department and ask to speak with the office that handles the issue in question. (IAHHC can help with this.)



# During the call

- Have the information in front of you
- Be concise
- State your name and location
- Have a specific request or action





# Meet

Meeting face-to-face with your representative or a state agency is the best way to lobby



# Meeting with your Member of the General Assembly

- Call the office of your Member of the General Assembly
- Don't be discouraged if you don't get a meeting with the Member – staff members are very knowledgeable and will pass along your message



# Meeting with a State Agency

- Call the agency with the person or office that handles your issues or that is involved in the legislation you are calling about
- Ask to schedule a meeting. Be flexible with your schedule.



# At the meeting

- Be early
- Be brief – Get to the point. Stay on message.
- Leave something behind – Give out your card. Have a fact sheet ready that explains the issue and your ask. Bring extra copies.
- The Statehouse is an unpredictable place. Be understanding if the office needs to rescheduled.



# Be a source of information

- Members and staff don't necessarily know about the issue. *You* are the expert.
- Learn about the issue before the meeting
- Be ready to answer questions
- Be prepared to get back to an office on any requests for information



# Build a relationship

- A major part of lobbying is building a relationship with a staffer or an office so that they listen to you and are open to hearing your ideas
- When you call or meet with someone, start to build a relationship with them by being informative and friendly



# Follow up: Be persistent!

- Follow up: Send a thank you card or email to any staffers you met or who helped you get a meeting
- Send any information that was requested in the meeting and ask if any additional information is needed



# Use a group effort

- Members of the General Assembly and state agencies are more likely to act if they hear from multiple constituents
- Ask others to write, call or schedule a meeting in support of the issue





# Conclusion

- Members of the General Assembly want to hear from their constituents
- Be a source of information
- Build a relationship
- Be persistent
- Don't be discouraged
- Use a group effort



# How Does A Bill Become Law ?

- Idea-Bill Drafted
- Filed & Read in Chamber
- Assigned to Committee
- Committee Hear Bill- public testimony
- Committee Vote
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading in Chamber
- To Other Chamber (repeat process)



# How Does A Bill Become Law ?

- Committee Hearing, 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading, 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading
- Back to Original Chamber if Changes
- Governor for Action
- If Author Dissents... to Conference
- After CC both Chambers vote on re-worked Bill



# Why Should An Agency Become Involved in the Legislative Process?

- **Cost Effective**
- **Entire Life Will be Affected by the Legislative Process**



# How Can An Agency Become Involved in the Legislative Process?

- **Become a Member of the Association**
- **Encourage Professionals in Center to Join Professional Societies**
  - **Power in Numbers**
  - **Funding for Lobbyist to Track and Influence Legislation**



# How Can A Agency Become Involved in the Legislative Process?

- Meet With & Go To Fundraisers for Legislators
- Testify when Asked
- Respond to *ALERTS* from the Association
- “The world is run by those who show up”



# How can An Agency Become Involved in the Legislative Process?

- *Give Money !!*
  - State PAC
  - Individual Contributions to Campaigns



# CAMPAIGN SPENDING

- **Governor Race**
  - **Must Raise \$20,000-25,000/DAY!**
  - **Each Candidate Must Raise Approximately \$15 million**





# Useful Online resources

[www.in.gov/iga](http://www.in.gov/iga)

[http://www.in.gov/house\\_republicans/](http://www.in.gov/house_republicans/)

[http://www.in.gov/house\\_democrats/](http://www.in.gov/house_democrats/)

[http://www.in.gov/senate\\_republicans/](http://www.in.gov/senate_republicans/)

[http://www.in.gov/senate\\_democrats/](http://www.in.gov/senate_democrats/)

<http://www.in.gov/apps/sos/legislator/search/>



**Thank you**

