LOBBY YOUR REPS TO LET NY VOTE

Tips for Effective Lobbying | Tips for Scheduling a Meeting | Pre-Meeting Checklist | Post-Meeting Checklist | Let NY Vote Tracking Sheet | Policy 1-sheet

- **Remember that lawmakers are human beings.** Begin your meeting with a compliment, if possible. Be friendly, polite, and dress respectfully. The Golden Rule applies to lobbying, too.
- **Never be late.** It’s a sign of disrespect that will be remembered when the lawmaker considers your viewpoint. Also, they won’t wait around for you. You’re also likely to find that the member has left for another appointment.
- **Put in it writing.** Always provide a fact sheet on your issue to lawmakers and their staff. If it’s not on paper, it won’t be remembered. Plus, staffers need to write memos and floor statements for their bosses. Do the work for them.
- **Do your homework.** Know if the lawmaker has taken a stance on the issue before or if she/he has particular areas of interest or concern.
- **All politics is local.** Share how the issue will affect the lawmaker’s district and local reasons for why the lawmaker should take the stance you advocate.
- **Never lie or make up information.** A lobbyist’s greatest strength is their credibility—lose that and you’re through. If you don’t know the answer to a question, tell them you’ll try to find out and then follow up promptly.
- **There is strength in numbers and strange bedfellows.** Build coalitions as broad and deep as you can. Mention how many members you have in the rep’s district (if it’s sizeable) and the number of groups in your coalition.
- **Be a good listener.** It will help endear you to the lawmaker and give you valuable information about the lawmaker’s views and concerns. Don’t do all the talking; have a conversation.
- **Press for a commitment.** Ask the lawmaker directly if she/he will take the particular stance you support or undertake the task you’ve requested.
- **Build a relationship.** Try to get to know lawmakers and their staff. Look for common interests, backgrounds, etc. Members and staff are more likely to meet with you again and listen to your views if they know who you are and have a friendly feeling toward you.
- **Say thank you.** Always thank lawmakers for taking time to meet with you and any good stances they take on your issues. Everyone likes positive feedback.
- **Don’t forget staff.** They’re the eyes and ears—and doorkeeper—for your rep.
- **Be strategic.** Focus your efforts on persuadable “swing” votes. Don’t waste your time on avowed opponents or known allies (except to say thanks)
- **Don’t burn bridges unnecessarily.** Use confrontation as a tool, not a way of life. Lawmakers won’t always do what you want, but they might sometimes if you keep a cordial relationship.
- **The squeaky wheel gets the grease.** Don’t expect miracles. However, polite persistence pays off. And remember, the power of the ballot box is yours!

*Source: Ohio Environmental Council, [www.theOEC.org](http://www.theOEC.org)*

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Tips for Scheduling a Meeting

1. Call the district office and ask to speak with a scheduler. Ask to set up a meeting with your legislator in his/her home district. Make sure to let the scheduler know you are a constituent and be sure to write down their name and email address so you can reference it later.

2. Try not leave the phone call without having a meeting scheduled, even if the meeting is scheduled for 3-4 weeks away. Have multiple options for dates to meet with your legislator ready. Thursdays and Fridays are typically the best times for representatives to be at their local offices.

3. If the legislator isn’t available, ask to meet with a staffer. The best person to meet with is the Chief of Staff or the Legislative Director.

4. You may be asked to fill out a form before they will schedule a meeting with you. Fill it out completely and send it back as quickly as you can.

5. If you’re asked what you want to discuss at the meeting, you can say “making our elections work better,” “voting reform” or “fair and efficient elections.”

6. For group visits, don’t worry if you don’t know the names of the people who’ll accompany you to the meeting. You can say that you would like a meeting for 3-5 constituents and that you’ll provide all of their names before the meeting.

Pre-Meeting Checklist

- Do you know what your “ask” is?
- Did you pack our attached 1-sheet (with your contact information on it) and any backup (i.e., newspaper article, report, photos, etc.)?
- Are you ready to refute opposition arguments?
- Are you ready to “Start where they are, not where you are”?
- Do you have a personal anecdote to share?
- Do you have a couple of questions you want to ask?
- Did you bring along a “thank you” or a compliment to share?
- Is there a field trip or event upcoming to which you can invite the lawmaker?

Post-Meeting Checklist

- Did you make the “ask”?
- What did the lawmaker say/promise/question/dispute/request?
- Why does the lawmaker support/oppose/have no position on your “ask”?
- Make a note of:
  - The date, time, and location of the meeting
  - The lawmaker’s staff who attended the meeting
  - What teammates who joined you for the meeting
  - What information you shared with the lawmaker
  - What strongly held beliefs, personal experience, trusted sources, etc., that the lawmaker cited to back up their position/actions/votes
  - Mementoes, awards, photos, etc., displayed in the lawmaker’s office
- Do you owe the lawmaker any additional information?
- Did you send a follow-up letter, email, or note?
- Did a member of your group report the results of the meeting back to Let NY Vote by completing this short form?
Script (feel free to make your own)

In order for our democracy to work, every eligible New Yorker deserves access to register and vote in our elections. New York is far behind the rest of the nation in terms of voting laws and it’s time to catch up. As a member of the Let NY Vote coalition, I want to see the following passed immediately in 2019, as equitable, accessible, comprehensive and fully funded legislation. What are your positions on the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Legislator's Position on:</th>
<th>The legislator has agreed to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Automatic Voter Registration</td>
<td>❑ Sponsor a bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ supports DMV PLUS other agencies</td>
<td>❑ Write a letter to the Speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ supports DMV ONLY</td>
<td>❑ Write a letter to the editor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ opposes</td>
<td>❑ Include position in constituent newsletter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ doesn’t know</td>
<td>❑ Host a rally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Restore voting to people on parole as an automatic measure</td>
<td>❑ Host a town hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ supports WITH funding</td>
<td>❑ None of the above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Supports WITHOUT funding</td>
<td>❑ Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ opposes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ doesn’t know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Flexibility to change your party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ supports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ opposes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ doesn’t know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ How close to election day?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Voter Friendly Ballot Act</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ supports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ opposes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ doesn’t know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Electronic Pollbooks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ supports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ opposes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ doesn’t know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Funding Early Voting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ supports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ opposes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ doesn’t know</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

If you are told that they support/co-sponsor a bill, say:

That’s great. But supporting a bill isn’t the same thing as passing a law. I want to be sure that [Assemblymember/Senator] is a champion for reform, arguing in conference and doing everything possible to be sure it becomes a law. Will they advocate for Voting Reform on the floor of the [assembly/senate]?

If they have skeptical questions: we have answers.

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NEW YORKERS NEED FREE, FAIR AND SECURE VOTING. Unlike many other states, our antiquated laws discourage voting and deny citizens the freedom to vote. New York must be a leader in voting rights, not an excuse for voter suppression. Now is the time.

Passing important and historic voting reforms on the first working day of the 2019 legislative session sent a strong pro-democracy message from the New York legislature. Those reforms are an important and significant first step toward the full modernization of New York’s elections. We look forward to working with both houses of the legislature to move closer to the fair, equitable and accessible election system that New Yorkers deserve by passing these additional long overdue, common-sense reforms during the balance of the 2019 legislative session.

AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION
Automatic Voter Registration is a proven way to improve voter participation. In New York, it is essential that AVR is enacted and implemented in governmental agencies beyond the DMV (e.g. department of health including Medicaid, etc).

PERMANENTLY RESTORE VOTING TO PEOPLE ON PAROLE
A statute is needed to remove unnecessary administrative complications, and should include funding to aid broad and fair implementation. This is the first step toward ensuring that no justice-involved individual loses the right to vote.

FLEXIBILITY TO CHANGE PARTY AFFILIATION
NY has the most restrictive deadline in the country, locking out hundreds of thousands of voters from voting in primaries. The change of party deadline must be shortened to allow people to make an informed decision.

READABLE, WELL-DESIGNED BALLOTS
New York needs legible, clear ballots. The Voter Friendly Ballot Act, written in consultation with experts in the fields of graphic design, user experience, and disability accommodation, among others, should become law in 2019.

ELECTRONIC POLLBOOKS
Electronic Pollbooks with Ballot on Demand capability significantly facilitates Early Voting. E-Pollbooks make the process faster, easier and more efficient. Ballot on Demand reduces cost and allows for the use of voting centers.

FUNDING FOR EARLY VOTING IN THE BUDGET

FUNDING FOR INITIAL START-UP COSTS, TRAINING, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EDUCATION OF THE REFORMS THAT PASSED ON JANUARY 14

Who is Let NY Vote? Let NY Vote is a statewide coalition of grassroots groups, established organizations, unions, and everyday citizens fighting to modernize New York’s elections. Our goal is to pass simple solutions to improve our elections and make registering and voting more accessible and equitable for all eligible New Yorkers.

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