

# **ADVOCACY 101**

## **Impacting Public Policy**



# POLITICS 101

No permanent friends

No permanent enemies

Non-partisan

Only issues



# WHO, WHY AND HOW TO ADVOCATE?

## Who

- **ANY New York resident can advocate for policies that they care about. It's not limited to citizens.**

## Why

- **By advocating for public policies that will attack climate change, water degradation, invest in higher education, combat corruption, and challenge special interests, and improve the lives of New Yorkers we will help achieve our mission.**

## How

- **By establishing a strong and influential network of supportive organizations, building coalitions and mobilizing the people most adversely impacted by policies that benefit the powerful, instead of the public, we move policymakers to support our agenda.**



# PREPARATION

- **Train on the issue**
- **Make sure that you have a strategy**
- **Make sure that you have good materials (at least one solid fact sheet)**

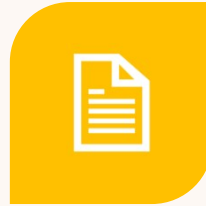
# MOBILIZE THE GRASSROOTS



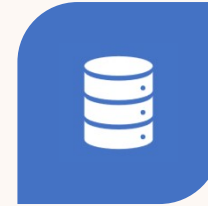
**GENERATE PHONE  
CALLS AND  
EMAILS IN  
SUPPORT OF THE  
POLICY AGENDA**



**EVERY WHERE  
YOU GO YOU  
SHOULD BE  
COLLECTING  
NAMES AND  
CONTACT  
INFORMATION  
FOR THOSE WHO  
ARE INTERESTED**



**ARE YOU  
CARRYING A  
SIGN UP SHEET  
WITH YOU AT  
ALL TIMES? WE  
CAN PROVIDE  
ONE...**



**BUILD A  
DATABASE  
TODAY FOR  
YOUR  
CAMPAIGN  
TOMORROW**



**WHAT TO DO  
WITH ALL  
NAMES?**

# HOW DO WE ORGANIZE?



# ORGANIZING BASICS



**Ask other organizations to ally themselves on the issue.**



**Create an excel/google sheet to keep track**



**Ask groups to sign onto a common document (and do so in writing so that you can keep track). Most commonly is a joint letter, not on letterhead.**



**Keep groups updated and involved.**



**Build lists!**

# DIRECT LOBBYING



**Personal Visit: (face to face contact is the most effective).**



**Written mail, email, social media**



**Mass mail**



**Petitions**



# INDIRECT LOBBYING



**Media Campaigns:**  
Letters to the editor, personal interest stories, advertising



**Talk with Reporter or Editor**



**Reach out to other organizations**



**Media Hits:** Media releases, special events' media (The effect of media can be enhanced when targeting an elected official's electorate.)



**An Opinion Piece**



**Distribute Action Flyers**



**Radio Call-In Shows**

# WHEN TO LOBBY

- When recruiting prime sponsors
- When recruiting co-sponsors
- When asking for support for a specific bill
- When new developments give rise to media coverage.
- Before the issue gets to the Legislature (state) or Congress (federal) and a policy decision is made.

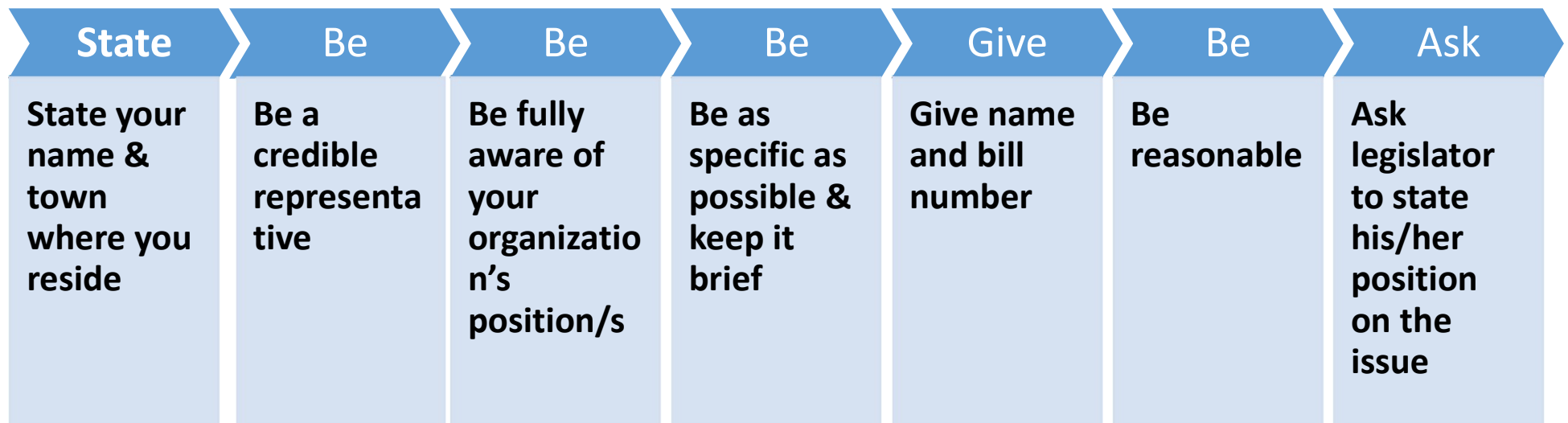


# WHO TO CONTACT

- **To schedule a meeting: District scheduler**
- **To contact your state legislators, U.S. Senators and member of Congress, use email, letters and/or leave phone messages**



# HOW TO LOBBY YOUR LEGISLATOR



# KNOW YOUR LEGISLATOR

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Research his/her record on related legislation and/or voting record

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General predisposition

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Constituent pressures he/she faces

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For New York State Legislature, Senate <https://www.nysenate.gov/senators-committees> and Assembly <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/>

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NYPIRG's Legislative Profiles <https://nypirg.org/goodgov/LegislativeProfiles/>

# KNOW YOUR ISSUE



**RESEARCH ISSUE  
THOROUGHLY BEFORE  
MEETING WITH YOUR  
LEGISLATOR**



**IF YOU ARE ASKED ABOUT SOMETHING YOU ARE  
NOT SURE OF OR DO NOT KNOW THE ANSWER,  
ADMIT TO IT AND LET HIM/HER KNOW THAT YOU  
WILL GET BACK TO HIS LEGISLATIVE AIDE AS  
SOON AS POSSIBLE (TRY TO PROVIDE ANSWER  
WITHIN 24 HOURS).**

# THE PERSONAL VISIT

- The most effective way of transmitting your message
- If the legislator is not available, ask to meet with a legislative aide



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## KNOW YOUR OPPOSITION

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- Inform legislators of opponents and their positions
- Identify other groups that support your position (coalition members)





# ROLE PLAY THE MEETING

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Take turns being the legislator and the advocate



Also asks the basic questions of how the issue impacts the district, the state at large, and where the issue is at in the legislative process



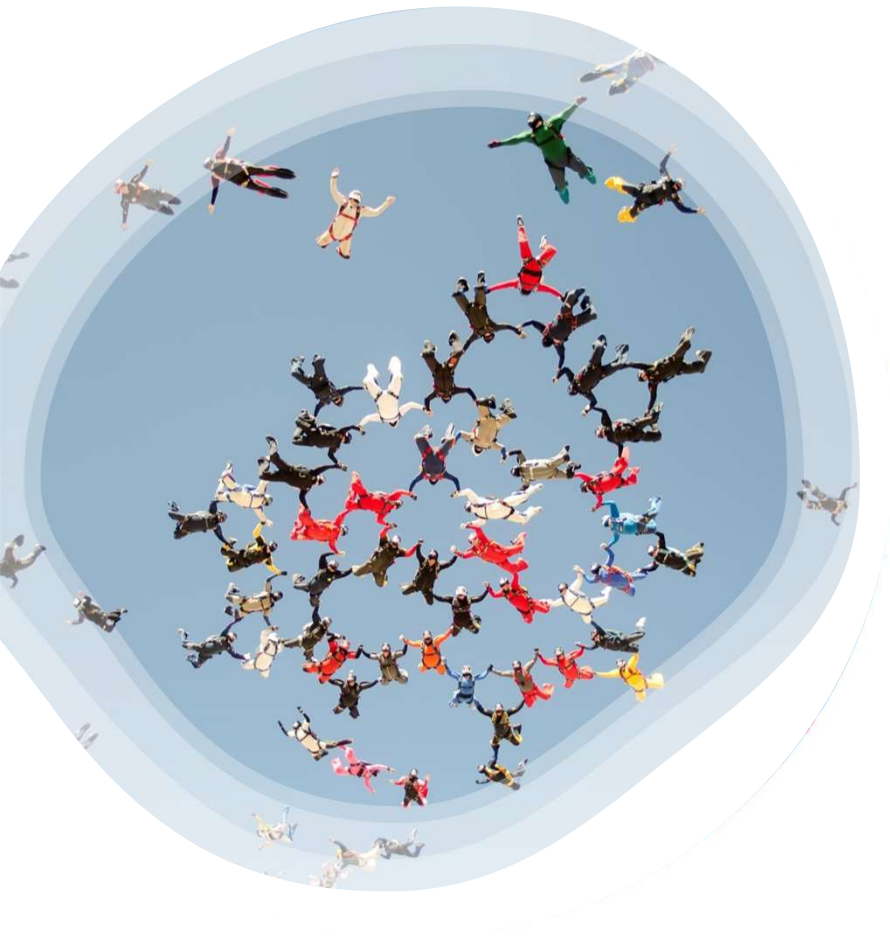
The advocate seeks to **PERSUADE**, not **DEBATE**



Legislator seeks to deflect making a commitment while interested. And can on occasion, try to shift the conversation away from the issue at hand



Advocate seeks to gently keep the conversation on track, while answering questions



## PRACTICE THE “PITCH”

- Take turns boiling down the fact sheet on the issue at hand and see if you can make a clear, compelling “elevator pitch” that can be used in unscripted, impromptu meetings, meetings with possible coalition partners, with interested faculty, and community members.

# DO'S AND DON'TS

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## DO:

**Address Senator, Representative or Assembly member properly**

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**Identify yourself (by name and town)**

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**Be brief and explicit, courteous and reasonable**

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**Know the status of the legislation (refer to a bill by number)**

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**Respect legislator's time**

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**When presenting several "ASKS" keep all information to one page**

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**Pay attention to staff**

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**Ask for specific action**

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**Win/lose gracefully**

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**Keep door open for further discussion**

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**Bring a copy of the bill and one key document to buttress your position**

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# DO'S AND DON'TS

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## DON'T:

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Assume the legislator is familiar with your issue

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Underestimate your opponent

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Flood the office with paper

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Mislead or lie

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Be arrogant, condescending or threatening

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Apologize for taking his/her time

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Argue or back legislators into a corner

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Make notes of a conversation while talking to a legislator

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Underestimate the influence of a chief of staff or legislative aide

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# POST VISIT

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**Send a thank you note**



**Send follow up email to  
legislative chief of staff or  
legislative aide with  
additional information**



**Make follow up call to  
inquire about legislator's  
position (will he/she  
support legislation?)**

# HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS

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**Policy change**



**Better informed  
volunteers, advocates,  
policymakers and media**



**New partnerships and  
alliances**



**Greater credibility for  
group**

# FOR MORE INFORMATION

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For New York State Legislature, Senate <https://www.nysenate.gov/senators-committees> and Assembly <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/>

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NYPIRG's Legislative Profiles <https://nypirg.org/goodgov/LegislativeProfiles/>

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General government, [www.ny.gov](http://www.ny.gov)

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Finding your elected official <http://www.elections.ny.gov/district-map/district-map.html>

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Good source of media information <http://empirereportnewyork.com/>

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