MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

A Guide to Legislative Advocacy in Utah
LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY 101

ELECTED OFFICIALS

If legislators don’t hear from you, they assume you approve of their actions.

CONSTITUENTS

FIRST THING’S FIRST,
RESEARCH YOUR LEGISLATOR

HTTPS://LE.UTAH.GOV

CONNECT WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS BEFORE THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION BEGINS IN JANUARY
WAYS TO CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATOR

CALL THEM OR WRITE THEM

- **TIP 1** Know your district and name of your legislator
- **TIP 2** Plan out what you will say
- **TIP 3** Remember to mention the bill number (if there is one) and why you are calling or writing
- **TIP 4** Make it short and sweet and get to your point quickly
- **TIP 5** Tell a personal story they can connect to
- **TIP 6** Problem, solution, action (i.e. “Vote yes on HB xxxx!”)

MEET THEM IN PERSON

- **STEP 1** Schedule your meeting
- **STEP 2** Be flexible and patient
- **STEP 3** Prepare and educate yourself and establish a clear goal
- **STEP 4** Follow up and say thank you!
WRITE A LETTER-TO-THE-EDITOR OR AN OP-ED

- Turn your legislative testimony into an opinion piece
- **Know the word limits:**
  - 250 words for a letter-to-the-editor, 600 words for an op-ed
- **Explain the issue**, and then make your argument
- **Prioritize simple** words and analogies over fancy phrases and complex arguments
- Make your **best and strongest** arguments **first**

BUILD A NETWORK

- Schedule a meeting with your representatives **before or after** (not during) the Legislative session
- **Connect with other people** and organizations testifying on the same bill or issue
- **Encourage a friend or colleague** to testify or write an opinion piece
- Attend a protest, rally, or event

INCREASE YOUR REACH

- **Talk about politics:** Share your testimony or opinion piece on social media using photos or graphics to increase its appeal
- **Bring a friend** or colleague to a rally or event
ADVANCED ADVOCACY TIPS

BUILD YOUR KNOWLEDGE

SUBSCRIBE TO A NEWSPAPER
...or a political e-newsletter like UtahPolicy’s Daily or The Salt Lake Tribune’s Political Cornflakes

YOU ARE NOT ALONE
Find (use Facebook or the Utah Nonprofits Association) or follow an advocacy organization that matches your goals

TRACK A BILL
...through the hearing and voting process at https://le.utah.gov

DOWNLOAD TALKING POINTS
...or position papers from allied nonprofits or advocacy groups.

TESTIFY AT A LEGISLATIVE HEARING

01. Write your testimony beforehand; groups like the ACLU of Utah can provide talking points
02. Highlight your expertise or experience about the issue, or tell a personal story
03. Keep your statement under 90 seconds
04. Bring a friend for support and to take photos of you testifying
05. Seating is limited at hearings for popular or controversial bills. Arrive 15 minutes early or ask a friend to save you a seat
06. Begin by stating your name, where you live, and why you are there—and always address the chair and members of the committee, not the public
07. Personal attacks never win votes, stay calm if you are challenged by a lawmaker

SPEAKING TO THE MEDIA

Be ready! Reporters try to snag interviews with people after they testify
Always look at the reporter, not the video camera
Sound more natural by rephrasing—not re-reading—your testimony during the interview
Emphasize your expertise or personal experience
Use inclusive phrases like, “common sense,” “will of the people,” and “safeguard our rights”
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