

How do we advocate?

- Lobbying
- Providing Public Testimony
- Community Mobilization
- Voting

Voting

- Register
- Know the candidates
- Know the issues
- Know **WHEN** to vote
 - Most local elections determined in the primary
 - Many elections in Georgia are determined in the runoff

Community Mobilization

- Coalition Building
- Petition
- Protest
- Direct Action
- Civil Disobedience

Two Simple Rules For Influencing Public Policy

- Elected and appointed officials make different decisions when watched by the affected constituency
- Get the right information to the right person at the right time



Effective Advocacy Communication

Five Key Elements of Effective Communication

1. Identify the issue
2. Cite a personal connection OR describe the local impact
3. Use key facts to support your case
4. Make a specific “ask”
5. Say “Thank you” and request an opportunity to follow-up

Providing Public Testimony

- Letters to the editor
- Town Hall Meetings – ***especially important in an election year***
- Hearings

Do's When Presenting Public Testimony

- Contact the board ahead of time to make sure you know how to sign up or to be placed on the agenda.
- If there is a staff or board member who is sympathetic, ask them to review your comments to make sure they are appropriate
- Know how long you have to speak. Often public comments are limited to 5 minutes or less

Do's When Presenting Public Testimony

- Dress professionally
- Bring copies of your comments for distribution
- **Start** by introducing yourself, where you are from and the reason you are speaking.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Use personal story and expertise
- Stick to time limit
- **THANK THEM**

DON'T

- Behave rudely – no matter what!
- Repeat arguments that have already been made.
- Make personal remarks about those testifying on the opposing side.
- Ignore the signal to end. If you have not finished, distribute copies of your comments.

Communicating with your Elected Officials

- Writing a Letter
- Sending an Email
- Calling your Elected Officials
- Providing Public Testimony
- Meeting with Elected Officials



Writing a Letter or Sending an Email

A personal letter from a constituent is a very powerful advocacy tool

- Limit letter to 1-2 pages
- Begin and end your letter by stating:
 - Why you are writing
 - What you would like the official to do
- Remain professional and courteous, even when expressing disappointment
- Be sure to address the official correctly



Calling Your Elected Officials

Calling your elected officials is particularly effective in the days just before they are scheduled to take action or vote on your issue

- Prepare notes to organize conversation
- Expect to speak with a staffer or policy advisor
- Be courteous



Meeting with Elected Officials and Their Staff

Before the Meeting

- Meet with your group beforehand to plan your strategy
- Don't be offended if you meet with an aide
- Be on time for your appointment
- Dress appropriately
- Know Your Legislator: <http://www.GeorgiaEquality.org>



Meeting with Elected Officials and Their Staff

During the Meeting

- Begin with introductions
- Be courteous & focused in your discussion
- Get verbal commitments from your Elected Officials
- Remember – your personal story is the most compelling advocacy tool you have
- Speak with confidence – you're the expert!
- If you're asked a question you don't know the answer to, be honest and tell them you don't know
- Keep a list of what the office wants and questions that are raised during the meeting
- Work as a team & provide your Elected Official with a fact sheet or packet of materials
- Leave business or personal cards
- Thank them for the meeting



Meeting with Elected Officials and Their Staff

After the Meeting

- Select someone to write a thank-you letter from the group
- Meet as a group to debrief immediately after the meeting
- Make sure someone in you group reports back on the meeting

