



Mountain State Centers for Independent Living Skills Development Class: **Working With Your Legislators and Other Elected Officials**

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During Your Visit

- Be on time! Be Positive!
- If a legislator doesn't agree with your positions always be gracious, today's opposition may be tomorrow's friend.
- Always introduce yourself. If you go in a group make sure everyone is introduced.
- Make sure you leave information on how to be reached in case the legislator or her/his staff have questions.

Remember the nine Be's

- Be prepared
- Be Brief
- Be Clear
- Be Accurate
- Be persuasive
- Be timely
- Be realistic
- Be persistent
- Be Appreciative

After Your Visit

- Be discreet in the halls, avoid gossip, and debrief in privacy.
- Send a thank-you letter. Timing is important remember to send the thank-you within a week after □ your visit.
- Don't give up the first time, it may take several sessions to educate officials to your point of view.

Communicating With Elected Officials Through Writing Or Telephone Calls

- When writing, include your return address on the letter.
- Use your own words.
- Write to say you approve, not just to complain.
- When writing your legislator, always address him or her as 'The Honorable'
- When writing, timing is important. Write shortly before or at the time the subject is being discussed or the decision is to be made. If you write too soon you may not capture the attention of the legislator. If you write too late, the decision may have already been made. Prepare the letter early and be ready to send it at the right time.
- Telephone calls do not substitute for face-to-face visits. They can be used if a rapport has already been established with the legislator or if an issue is contested and you are part of a group trying to convey a broad community support for a position.
- Remember however, if you can not make visits to your legislator or other elected officials, please write to them about your opinions and telephone them to let them know how you feel about an issue.

Contributing Resource: NCIL/ILRU National Training & Technical Assistance Project:□
The Ins & Outs Of Working With Elected Representatives



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