



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

Lobbying Tips

Consider Yourself an Information Source

Remember, you are the expert on law enforcement. Utilize this opportunity to educate your elected officials about the needs and concerns of law enforcement officers. (Refer to the Legislative Briefing Book provided by the NFOP Legislative Office.) Legislators want to know how a specific issue will affect their districts. Share personal or local experiences about the issues with your legislators. If you don't know the answers to some of their questions—tell them so. Make notes and follow-up with the answers after the meetings.

Try to Make Personal Connections

Make the legislator aware of any personal connections you may have. No matter how insignificant you may feel it is, if you have friends, relatives, or colleagues in common, let them know. Use personal examples from your own life or the lives of your neighbors.

Be Organized

Be on Time. If you are part of a group meeting with an elected official, select a spokesperson to lead the discussion. Know the time frame you are under, and highlight a few key issues. Determine who will speak on each issue.

Be Concise

Legislators (and staff) have limited time and many demands. Be sure to stay on message on those three top legislative priorities important to law enforcement. You will be lucky to have a full 15 minutes to discuss them with the legislator or staff and it is critical that they understand the importance of them all.

Expect Surprises and Be Flexible

Legislators have very unpredictable schedules on session days, causing them to run late or be called away. Don't be disappointed if they have to cut your meetings short. Make the most of them by focusing on a few key issues and following-up with detailed information in writing. Don't be disappointed if you meet with a member of their staff; often they know more details about the issues than their bosses do and they are the ones who advise legislators how to vote.

Anticipate Reactions and Stay on Message

After explaining your views, ask the legislators where they stand on the issue. Try to understand their perspective and tailor your approach accordingly. If they are undecided, focus on your message. Respectfully maintain your position, even if you know they don't agree. If they change the subject to avoid getting pinned down on an issue, try to bridge the discussion back to your message.

Follow-Up

Send thank you notes reviewing the issues you discussed. Be sure to send legislators any additional materials requested, including answers to questions for which you didn't have answers, during the meeting. Let them know you are a resource that is available to them in the future.