

The Legislative Process

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HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL LOBBYIST FOR YOUR MUNICIPALITY:



Connecticut Conference of Municipalities

CCM is Connecticut's statewide association of towns
and cities!

CCM represents municipalities at the General Assembly, before the state executive branch and regulatory agencies, and in the courts.



CCM, The Statewide Association of Towns and Cities

CCM provides member towns and cities with a wide array of other services:

- Management assistance
- Individualized inquiry service
- Assistance in municipal labor relations
- Technical assistance and training
- Policy development
- Research and analysis, publications
- Information programs
- Service programs such as workers' compensation, liability-automobile-property insurance, risk management
- and energy cost-containment



CCM, *The Statewide Association of Towns and Cities*

Federal representation is provided by CCM in conjunction with the National League of Cities. CCM was founded in 1966.

CCM is governed by a Board of Directors, elected by the member municipalities, with due consideration given to geographical representation, municipalities of different sizes, and a balance of political parties. Numerous committees of municipal officials participate in the development of CCM policy and programs. CCM has offices in New Haven (the headquarters) and in Hartford.

STAY WELL INFORMED

- Visit the Connecticut General Assembly's website (www.cga.ct.gov). This is an amazing resource with the most current language available on proposed legislation,
- The site links:
- All 151 State Representatives
- All 36 State Senators
- 26 bipartisan committees
- Non-partisan staff offices such the Office of Fiscal Analysis and the Office of Legislative Research
- The four Legislative Caucuses, House and Senate Democrats & Republicans
- The revised Connecticut General Statutes

Staying Informed

Review your bill tracking sheet if not on a daily basis then at least every few days.

Things move fast:

- A committee can hold a public hearing on a bill with as little as 5 calendar days notice.
- A committee agenda can be posted as late as 5pm the day before a meeting to vote on a bill.



Act Quickly

Respond to CTX's requests regarding legislative proposals public hearing testimony, letters, phone calls and/or faxes in support of -or in opposition to -key bills.

Remember timing is everything! Your email, phone call, or letter will have no affect if it takes place after the bill has been acted on. Unfortunately, because of the tightness of the General Assembly deadlines, the window for action on your part may only be one or two days.



Develop working relationships with your local delegation!

You should meet with your legislators regularly throughout the year and during the General Assembly session to discuss legislation and issues of importance to your community.

It is important to let legislators know that you are watching their votes on state-local issues.

It is better to develop the relationship with your elected representatives before you need to ask them for a vote on a bill.



Clout: Use it or lose it!

Is your Senator or Representative a legislative leader or member of a key committee(i.e., Appropriations; Finance, Revenue and Bonding, Planning and Development, etc.)?

If so, your role is especially important. You may be asked to take on a more active role on behalf of your town and on behalf of CTX.



Everyone needs to be heard

Even if your town is not located in a key committee member's district, you still have a role to play.

Every vote and voice counts!

And remember:

Any rank-and-file legislator, could be tomorrow's chairman and every Speaker of the House was once a freshman legislator.

Follow Through

- Bills are often acted on by several committees, but your letters or other communications do not necessarily follow them through the process.
- What's more, CTX's position on a bill may change as the bill is amended.
- Consequently, it is vital that you continue to communicate with state legislators at the direction of your lobbyist and CTX's legislative committee, even though you may have already contacted them at an earlier point in the process.



Follow Through

Don't worry about contacting your legislators "too many times".

If your legislators don't hear from you on a consistent basis, they will make decisions on important local issues without knowing the impact they will have on your profession and the towns and cities in their district.

Create Coalitions

- It is important to identify who may be effected by a piece of proposed legislation.
- Do you stand with them or against them?
- Is there room to compromise?
- When do you meet with them? Remember, Legislators are where they are because they won a popular election and often they will work to bring two sides together.



Potential Coalition Partners for CTX

In the building you work in everyday there are the foundations of numerous strong and statewide coalitions:

- The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (Mayors, First Selectmen and Town Managers)
- The Town Clerk
- The Assessor
- The Registrar of Voters
- The Municipal Attorney

Common Courtesy

- As Tax Collectors you know what it's like to be confronted by hostile or rude members of your community.
- Approach your legislators, as you would want your customers to approach you...with respect and courtesy.



Saying Thank You

Remember to thank legislators regularly and publicly for their work.

It is one of the most important (and easiest)
things you can do!

Recognition at a special ceremony or meeting, plaques or resolutions presented to them for display in their office, and letters to the editor praising the responsiveness of legislators to local needs can be effective public ways of expressing appreciation to your legislators.

A Word of Caution

- Be very wary of publicly criticizing your legislators' actions. Some legislators may rarely vote with your association or with your town, yet they come through on crucial votes (i.e., tax collector statute revision bill).

Keep Your Eye on the Prize

- Taking them to task in a public forum for a series of votes on relatively unimportant issues can lose their votes permanently on much more vital issues.
- It is much more effective to sit down with a legislator in private to discuss areas of disagreement and potential resolution before launching public criticism.



Patience

Some controversial issues come up year after year without resolution. Often a bill will come up session after session before it is resolved (i.e., Jeopardy Tax Collections).

Your continued efforts and the efforts of CTX to participate and influence the process year after year is essential for long-term success at the General Assembly.

Links to Learn More

- CCM Public Policy and Advocacy:
www.ccm-ct.org
- CT General Assembly Office of Fiscal Analysis
www.cga.ct.gov/ofa/
- CT Office of Policy and Management (OPM):
www.ct.gov/opm

Thank you

- CCM is your partner at the local and state level.
- Do not hesitate to contact us with issues that effect you and your town.

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