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**EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY:  
HOW TO SPEAK TO A LEGISLATOR  
Advocacy Check List**

1. Introduce yourself and organization (avoid acronyms or abbreviations).
2. Make an appointment (ask to speak to a staff aide if legislator is unavailable).
3. Start with your bottom line; be as concise as possible.
4. Know your subject, including its history in the Capitol.
5. If lobbying a bill, bring at least two copies.
6. Learn the committee assignments of the legislator; is he or she assigned to the particular committee to which the legislation has been referred?
7. Use proper terminology.
8. Learn as much as possible about your legislator.
9. Know where your bill is in the process.
10. Do not threaten.
11. Do not be afraid to plead ignorance when you do not know the answer to a question (definitely don't lie).
12. Ask questions wherever appropriate.
13. Offer to help, where appropriate.
14. NEVER, NEVER, NEVER, NEVER mix fund raising with legislation.
15. Don't overstay your visit.
16. Do not argue. Agree to disagree.
17. Exchange business cards with the legislator and staff (pick up staff business cards even if they are not present).
18. Follow-up.

## **BASIC TERMINOLOGY**

**Member:** Refers to an Assembly Member or Senator

**Committee:** Place where legislation is heard prior to the floor.

**Author:** Legislator who is carrying the bill.

**Sponsor:** Group or organization (like FACCC) who has brought idea for legislation to a legislator. In Washington, DC the sponsor is the Congressional Representative or Senator carrying the measure.

**Placing a Call:** After committee or floor deliberation, the committee or floor may decide to hold open the vote until all Members have a chance to decide.

**Lifting a Call:** When a committee or floor decides to take an additional roll call vote on a bill in which a call has been placed. If the bill does not have enough votes for passage once a call has been lifted, the committee or floor can decide to place another call, kill the bill, or reconsider it for a later date.

**File:** Booklet showing the location of bills in the legislative process.

**Third Reading:** Bill heard on the Assembly or Senate floor.

**WARF:** Without reference to file, meaning that the bill is being voted or amended regardless of where it appears in the File.

## **POLITICAL GOLDEN RULES:**

- 1) If you're not political, politics will find you. Get involved.
- 2) The California Legislature represents more people than the entire country of Canada. Treat your legislators with respect (although not with awe – they are human).
- 3) It's not who you know, it's who knows you. It's relatively meaningless if you can recognize your legislators; it's a big deal if they know you.