

## **The Three Golden Rules of Advocacy Lobbying**

1. Make It Personal!
2. Make It Personal!
3. Make It Personal!

### **Q. How can I be the most effective when meeting with my legislator?**

**A.** Adhere to the “Three Golden Rules.” Effective advocacy involves telling your story, not being an expert in interpreting legislation. It’s that personal message that is more effective than anything else. Even if you have only a few minutes of personal contact, or if you decide to put your thoughts in writing, tell how what is being proposed impacts you or your family personally. Everything else is secondary.

### **Q. But since I’m not an expert on the proposal how can I answer questions?**

**A.** Most legislators aren’t experts and have little time or personal staff to research issues. It’s you who perform a service by providing information to them. It’s not your job to be able to answer technical or other questions. If that situation occurs tell the legislator you’ll have someone get back to them with answers, but make sure you relate to them again how important this legislation is to you and how it effects you.

### **Q. What are the most and least effective ways to contact my legislator?**

**A.** The most effective methods of contact in order of importance are:

- Personal visit in district or at the Capitol;
- Hand written letter or note; and
- Phone call leaving name, address and contact number with a short statement about your position and a message that you would like a call back, if possible.

The least effective methods of contact In order of importance are:

- Calls with no personal information provided;
- Form letters and cards;
- E-mails;
- Petitions;
- Calls from outside the legislator’s district; and
- Picketing legislative offices and other such behavior.

### **Q. I’ve had my meeting or discussion. Now what?**

**A. The Fourth Golden Rule is ... Follow-up!** A handwritten note after a personal meeting or call is important. In advocacy, it’s always a good idea to let a first visit be a door opener, and then schedule visits on a quarterly or semi-annual basis. Sometimes very valuable support, relationships and even friendships can develop from such periodic meetings.

**The Fifth Golden Rule is ... Say Thank You!** Legislators often receive criticism but seldom receive thanks. It is important to determine how your legislator voted on your issue and communicate with them to let them know you’ve been paying attention. Most don’t. You should. Individuals act differently if they know someone is paying attention and watching. But never forget to say thank you when appropriate. A little sweetener can go a long way.