

# Helpful Advocacy Tips

## Advocacy Tips

- 1.) **Arrive early for good parking.** Try to arrive to each appointment early and do not take more than the allotted time. Before entering the office, pause 30 seconds to breathe and prepare yourself mentally for your visit.
- 2.) **Enter the office and greet receptionist if available.** If he/she is on the phone or in conversation with someone else, look around the office to locate the guest book, business cards, legislative newsletters, etc.
- 3.) **Sign** the guest book
- 4.) **Take a business card for the legislator** (usually located near receptionist or guest book).
- 5.) **Most of the time you will meet with the legislative aide** rather than the legislator. Do not be discouraged; aides often do most of the research on specific issues to assist legislators in making decisions.

## Present Your Issue

- A. **Verbally** present your argument
- B. **Personalize** your involvement with this issue when introducing yourself.
- C. **Provide a hand-out** with bullet-points of your position/plan
  - \* If you are bringing several pieces of material, provide these in a brightly colored file folder with the topic and your organization's name on the label. This makes it easier to file and easier to remember you when they need to go back to the information
  - \* Also provide a "table of contents" cover sheet that describes what's in the folder
- D. **Give others in the meeting time to speak**
- E. **Draw out specific answers to specific questions.** Politicians can sometimes generalize or change the subject
- F. **Listen carefully** to what the legislator has to say, even if you disagree. He or she will let you know the types of information that will change their minds
- G. **Be respectful** at all times. Don't get angry or yell.
- H. **Refrain from negative or sarcastic comments** about other legislators. Relationships between elected officials can be very complex

## Leave on Good Terms

- A. **Thank the legislator and his/her aide** for their time and consideration, even if the meeting does not appear to be fruitful
- B. **Ask the receptionist to be placed on the legislator's mailing list**—their newsletters contain information about voting records, priorities, legislative aides, etc., which will all be helpful to you in the future. It also shows his/her staff that you are serious about your advocacy work.

**Final Step** Complete the Legislative Visit Form and return it to



Christian Life Commission  
221 East 9th St., Suite 410, Austin, Texas 78701  
512.473.2288 (o) 512.473.2707 (f )  
suzii.paynter@bgct.org  
stephen.reeves@bgct.org