

# **SENATOR BILL MONNING'S TOP TEN TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY**



The following ten tips for effective advocacy are presented as guidelines and are certainly not exhaustive. Through your experience you will be able to modify and add to this list. The important thing is to never underestimate the importance of your voice in helping to shape public policy!

1. Identify your goals and objectives clearly. What is the problem? What is the solution? Be able to articulate your preferred outcome clearly and concisely. Write it down.
2. Build respectful relationships and your reputation as an honest and reliable advocate;
3. Develop relationships with legislative staff members and always treat them with respect. You should treat a receptionist, scheduler, and legislative staffers as you would the elected member. Remember, staff are your key to gaining access to an elected representative and in shaping his/her views on an issue. Learn names of staff.
4. Back-up your advocacy position with facts, data, scientific studies, etc.;
5. Include a printed “leave-behind” when visiting a legislator or staff member. No more than one page, but you can include supporting documentation, data etc. You may be one of 10-15 visits to the legislator in one day. The “leave behind” will be reviewed and acted upon. It should include your contact information: phone(s) , email, etc.
6. Develop support among colleagues, neighbors, and especially within a professional association before approaching a legislator. Presenting a proposal or advocating a position as a member of the California Academy of Family Physicians, Monterey County Medical Society, Sierra Club, Hospitality Association, a neighborhood group, parents group, etc. carries more credibility and currency than that of a single advocate. Mobilize a diverse group of constituents ( people who live and vote in the district of the member) of the legislators/elected you seek to influence;
7. Build coalitions with like-minded individuals and organizations. There is strength in numbers! Work to neutralize or eliminate opposition by engagement and possible compromise;
8. Be persistent without being a pest. Get the names and contact information of people you meet or communicate with. Request a response. Check-in after allowing the elected and staff reasonable time to respond;
9. Share your perspectives and organizational positions with news organizations and in social media; submit Op Ed pieces (opposite opinion pages—usually no longer than 500-600 words... the shorter the better in terms of getting printed.) Use “Letters to the Editor” and “soap boxes” on television and radio, as a means to reach readers/constituents/voters. Social media offers many avenues for getting your message out. and,
10. Maintain your relationships with legislators and staff even if disappointed by a single vote or outcome. You need to see the big picture and maintain the relationships that win you the respect of those who may sometimes disappoint you.