

Targeting Legislators

Lobbying legislators is about persuading them to do what you want. There are five main categories of legislators to think about, each requiring its own special strategy:

1. Champions

All issues need a group of lawmakers dedicated to being tireless, committed advocates for your cause. What they can do for you is make the case to their colleagues, help develop a strong "inside" strategy, and be visible public spokespeople. What they need is good information, and visible support outside the Capitol.

2. Allies

Another group of legislators will be on your side but can be pushed to do more -- to speak up in party caucuses or on the floor.

3. Fence Sitters

Some legislators will be uncommitted on the issues, potentially able to vote either way. These are your key targets and lobbying strategy is about putting together the right mix on "inside" persuasion and "outside" pressure to sway them your way.

4. Mellow Opponents

Another group of legislators will be clear votes against you, but who are not inclined to be active on the issue. With this group what's key is to keep them from becoming more active, lobbying them enough to give them pause but not to make them angry.

5. Hard Core Opponents

Finally, there are those lawmakers who are leading your opposition. What is important here is to isolate them, to highlight the extremes of their positions, rhetoric and alliances and to give other lawmakers pause about joining with them.