

THE COMMANDMENTS OF ADVOCACY

- I. Thou shall register and vote; you must be in the game to play!
- II. Thou shall know the players: your own legislators, the Committee Chairs, Legislative Leadership, LRC staff and the Executive Branch Secretaries, Commissioners and staff.
- III. Thou shall know your issue well and relate that issue to your legislators, understanding there are many pressing concerns.
- IV. Thou shall understand the process and rules of the game.
- V. Thou shall make available accurate, reliable information to your legislators and other players in a timely fashion!
- VI. Thou shall be creative in building coalitions and partnerships, looking for shared interests, educating others in your cause and working to “put a face” on your issue.
- VII. Thou shall never underestimate your power as an individual to “change the world”.
- VIII. Thou shall be willing to compromise, to put a foot in the door.
- IX. Thou shall stay in touch with your legislators all the time – not just during the session.
- X. Thou shall never give up...there’s always the next session!
- XI. **MOST IMPORTANT COMMANDMENT: Thou shall treat the legislator or policy-maker as you would want to be treated – with courtesy, respect and a “Thank You”!**

Contact Information for Kentucky Policy-Makers

To Find Out Who Your Elected Officials Are:

Call **1-888-VOTE-SMART (1-888-868-3762)** or log on to www.vote-smart.org and enter your home address and zip code. [Due to the redistricting legislation passed in August 2013, your legislators may have changed!]

To Contact State Legislators in Frankfort:

To Leave a Message for Legislators, Call: 1-800-372-7181

(Can also be used to leave a message for an entire House or Senate Committee or for every legislator in the House or Senate). **Legislators' Email and Fax Numbers** in Frankfort can be found on the LRC website, <http://lrc.ky.gov>

To Contact State Legislators at Home:

Legislators' home addresses and phone numbers are available on the website, <http://www.lrc.ky.gov>, or from the LRC Public Information Office in the Capitol Annex; phone: 502-564-8100, ext. 517.

To Contact the Governor:

To call: 502-564-2611 (*no toll-free number*) **TDD:** 502-564-9551

To write: Governor's Office 700 Capitol Avenue, Suite 100
Frankfort, KY 40601

To fax: Fax 502-564-2517

To email: <http://governor.ky.gov>: click on "Contact" left of his picture

To Contact Federal Legislators or

To Contact Other KY Executive Branch Officials:

Kentucky Government Website: <http://www.kentucky.gov>

(From this site, you can click on "Government" and locate federal legislators or connect to the Kentucky state phone directory and all Kentucky cabinet home pages.)

To Track State Legislation:

Legislative Calendar Line: **1-800-633-9650**

(Daily recording of committee meeting schedules and bills on committee agendas)

Bill Status Line: **1-866-887-9016**

(Provides latest status of each bill each day; line is open 8-4:30)

Legislative Website: <http://www.lrc.ky.gov>

(This site has district maps, names and home addresses of all legislators; also, proposed bills, bill status, reference materials, Kentucky Revised Statutes and Kentucky Administrative Regulations.)

MEETING WITH LEGISLATORS: DO's AND DON'T's

DO

- ◆ Get to know your own Representative and Senator. No one has more influence with a legislator than a voting constituent!
- ◆ Remember that personal communications with your legislator are the most effective. In-person contacts, telephone calls, hand-written notes are the most likely to get the legislator's attention. Some respond to emails, others don't.
- ◆ Be sure your legislator knows who you represent, or what group you are a member of when you contact him/her about an issue. This is particularly important when contacting a legislator from a district other than your own.
- ◆ Be polite, be brief, be specific (using the bill number if possible) in your communications. Offer to answer questions or to get more information if you are asked a question. It is much better to say that you don't know the answer, but will get back with it, than to give a wrong answer or misleading information!
- ◆ Be a good listener and hear what the legislator has to say on the issue.
- ◆ Respect the legislator's right to disagree and to vote against your issue.
- ◆ Know how the process works: the committee system, the timetable, how bills come for a vote, etc. Let the legislator know that you have done your homework!

DON'T

- Be pushy. If you are told that a legislator cannot see you, ask to make another appointment or leave a note and follow up at a later time.
- Be sarcastic, critical or threatening. And don't embarrass or continually argue with a legislator. Don't say to a legislator, "You promised me...." If anything, say "I understood you to say...."
- Extend your visit beyond a reasonable amount of time.
- Be misleading with a legislator – either about the facts, the extent of the issues or the opposition to your position.
- Try to tell the legislator how to vote on a bill. Instead, point out how a vote one way or the other will affect the issue...and the legislator's constituency.
- Show anger or resentment toward a legislator who votes against you. The legislative process is a long and on-going one, and chances are that you will need to gain the support of that legislator another time on another issue!
- **Forget to say "Thank You!" to the legislator or policy-maker and to the staff...and don't forget to follow up with a hand-written Thank You note!**