

BASIC PHILOSOPHY

- 1) You can't do it all.
- 2) It is impossible to convince, but possible to shape.
- 3) Whether you supported them or not, your elected officials serve you. Some of the time.
- 4) There is a role for responsible constituents. It is as important as the role of a responsible legislator or elected official.

PICK AND CHOOSE

- 1) Make a list and commit only to that for which you are willing to spend the time.
- 2) Do only what interests you or that which you feel you can do to make a difference.
- 3) Express opinions only about the issues most important to you.

Know the System – Good Citizenship

Be active by registering to vote and be strategic in registering. You may have to register more than once in a term to take active part in the primaries.

Know the basics so that you can get others to vote and encourage them to do so. Make it possible for them to do so whether they agree with you or not. Your actions here can range from informal to activism.

Make a point to read, talk to or develop a sense of candidates in the primary. Decide which candidate will be the best OF THE SELECTIONS.

Write a note to that candidate and give him/her a small donation. Agree to allow candidates to put yard signs in your yard. You don't have to volunteer, but you should tell people for whom you've decided to vote.

Once the primary is held, decide which candidate will be the best of those in the campaign. Write a note and give him/her a small donation. Introduce yourself and state that you are very interested in _____, _____, _____ and that you will be letting him know your stances on the issues important to you. If he/she offers to give you a cell number, make sure you thank them and keep it. At this point in the process, candidates want your attention, so you can establish a relationship with both.

Your goal now is to make a relationship with candidates so that you have a relationship built with the person who will eventually be your elected official. The connection doesn't have to be much – send a newspaper clipping. Reference a web article. Email at least once per month. Call and leave a message only if it is important. Sign up for your elected official's newsletter.

ONCE someone is elected, even if it's not your preferred candidate make sure you cultivate a relationship with him/her. Your efforts can range from an occasional note or email to a call or email about a specific issue.

- Create a contact list for your elected officials and of those from your region who may share your views on particular issues.
- Introduce yourself providing your contact information. You may do this through email, correspondence, or in person at a public forum.
- Once the relationships are established, cultivate them by commenting and sending information about issues of importance to you.
- Set a goal of attending at least one public coffee or forum per session.

LESSON ONE - DO NOT REINVENT THE WHEEL.

The Kansas Legislature: www.kslegislature.org

The Kansas House (Leadership, Committees, Roster, Happenings)
http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2015_16/chamber/house/

The Kansas Senate (Leadership, Committees, Roster, Happenings)
http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2015_16/chamber/senate/

ELECTIONS & REGISTRATION: KANSAS SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE <http://www.sos.ks.gov/> FAQ — ELECTIONS & LEGISLATIVE

Q. How do I register to vote?

A. There are four steps.

- 1) Obtain the voter registration application. You may use the Kansas form or the federal form.
 - a) The Kansas Voter Registration Application form is available for printing on the secretary of state's website here (Español) and on the various county websites. Also, it is available at many locations established by the county election officer. Banks, libraries, schools and government offices usually have the form. Also, everyone has an opportunity to register when applying for or renewing a driver's license or applying for public assistance.
 - b) The federal Voter Registration Application is accepted in Kansas. The federal form is found here (Español).
- 2) Fill out the application legibly and completely then sign it.
- 3) If you are a new Kansas voter on and after Jan. 1, 2013, include your U.S. citizenship document regardless of which application form you use. A list of acceptable documents to prove U.S. citizenship is here.

In order to be eligible to vote in state and local elections in Kansas, you must provide a U.S. citizenship document.

If you use the federal form and you do not provide a citizenship document, then you will be registered to vote only for federal offices and not for state and local elections.

- 4) Deliver the completed application (with proof of citizenship if a new Kansas voter) in person, by mail, by fax or by email to the county election officer in the county where you live, no later than the twenty-first day before any election.

Q. How do I find my legislators?

A. Go to www.ipsr.ku.edu/ksdata/vote/general2012.shtml.

Q. Where is the office of Vital Statistics?

A. The Office of Vital Statistics, where one may obtain copies of birth and death certificates, is located in Suite 130, Curtis State Office Building, 1000 SW Jackson, Topeka, KS 66612. The phone number is **(785) 296-1423**.

Q. Where can I get a copy of a birth certificate?

A. The Office of Vital Statistics, where one may obtain copies of birth and death certificates, is located in Suite 130, Curtis State Office Building, 1000 SW Jackson, Topeka, KS, 66612. The phone number is **(785) 296-1423**.

Q. Where can I get census information?

- A. Some information is available from the Secretary of State's office, Elections Division, at **(785) 296-4561**. More complete information is available at the U.S. Bureau of the Census Internet Web site at www.census.gov.

Q. Where can I get election results?

- A. For local election results contact your county election officer. For state and national results contact the Secretary of State's office at **(785) 296-4561**.

Q. How can I get a copy of a bill passed by the legislature?

- A. The text of bills are available at www.kslegislature.org. Each year's bills that are passed into law are published in the Kansas Session Laws, available for purchase from the Secretary of State's office.

Q. How do I get campaign finance information?

- A. Call the Secretary of State's office at **(785) 296-4561** to arrange for the viewing or purchase of campaign finance reports. Some summary information is posted on the Web site of the Governmental Ethics Commission at www.kansas.gov/ethics/.

Q. Where do I file as a candidate for office?

- A. To file for a local office contact your county election officer. To file for a state or national office contact the Secretary of State's office at **(785) 296-4561**.

Q. How do I purchase a Kansas flag?

- A. Kansas flags are available from the Sec. of State's office at **(785) 296-4557**. An order form is available. Sales tax and shipping charges are added as needed. Purchasers may request to have a flag flown over the Capitol.

Q. How can I contact my county election office?

- A. A list of county election offices and contact information is available on our site.

Q. How do I find out where I vote?

- A. Contact your county election officer. A list of county election officers and contact information is available on our site.

Q. How do I know what the candidate's stands on issues are?

- A. The Secretary of State's office does not collect or disseminate information on candidates' stands on issues. You must contact the candidate or the candidate's campaign office to obtain such information.

Q. How do I purchase a list of registered voters?

- A. Each county's list is available from the county election officer. For statewide or multi-county information, the only source is the Secretary of State's office. Lists are available for purchase in various electronic media. Fill out the CVR form; the cost depends on the request. Call the Information Technology department of the Secretary of State's office at **(785) 296-0080**.

KNEA — FOUR WAYS TO COMMUNICATE

Letters — Personal letters that state your views on how the proposed legislation will affect your profession, schools, or community are the individual's basic communications tools. Such communications should be addressed primarily to one's own legislator. Timing of such communication is vital. To be effective, they should be sent when the legislature is under - or about to come under - consideration in committee or subcommittee. Click here for more hints on effective written communications.

E-mails — When speed is desirable because of imminent action on a piece of legislation, emails may be sent to a legislator. Click here for more hints on effective written communications.

Telephone Calls — Several hints for phone contact with your legislator can be found in the "How To Phone" your legislator document. In addition, here are a few quick notes to keep in mind. This form of communication is particularly effective when the person making the call worked in the campaign of the legislator or has established a personal relationship with the legislator. Direct contact with the legislator is not always possible, but messages can be left with aides or secretaries. It would not be appropriate to use this communication method exclusively.

Meeting with Legislators — The most effective communication, naturally, is that which takes place face to face. You should plan to meet with your legislator as frequently as possible. Opportunities for such meetings come between sessions and during recesses.

At campaign time, incumbents are generally eager to meet with groups of constituents. These meetings must be planned with care or else they will become merely platforms for political speeches by the Representative or Senator. To guard against this, tell the legislator that the purpose of the meeting is to give constituents the opportunity to express their views on legislation and to ask specific major issues. It may be helpful to get together beforehand and role-play these sessions to gain understanding of the issues and dynamics of the parties involved.

Meetings with newly elected Representatives and Senators and re-elected incumbents are particularly desirable. Such meetings should be held as soon as convenient after the November elections.

In addition to personal or small group meetings with your legislators, you may want to plan at least one meeting a year at which the legislator meets with a larger group such as your site council or PTA/PTO. Here again the meeting should be structured to give constituents the opportunity to ask meaningful questions on which they have been briefed.

From the "NEA Educators' Guide to Lobbying", <http://www.knea.org/home/316.htm>

Elected officials care what their mail says. A logical, courteous letter carries weight; it can change a legislator's mind, particularly when the legislator is wavering on an issue. It is important that your message be written as effectively as possible. Here are a few points:

Content:

- Keep it brief. Be as brief as possible, but don't sacrifice clarity and completeness. Two pages is a maximum but one page is best. Use your own words and not form letters.
- Identify yourself. Let your legislators know that you live and/or work in their district.
- Keep it focused. Limit the correspondence to one subject. Otherwise, you decrease the force of your argument and complicate your legislator's efforts to act.
- Get to the point. State your purpose at the outset and use the remainder of the letter to expand your views. Be constructive suggesting alternatives or better solutions, if possible. A few strong, well thought out points will be more influential than a long laundry list of reasons.
- Use facts. Issues you write about may be emotion-laden, but beware of the nonfactual argument. It will make your legislator less willing to consider your point next time, too.
- Relate it to home. Emphasize the effect of the legislation in question on your legislator's own constituency and/or school districts. Give facts and illustrations - use your own knowledge and experience to inform the legislator. Legislators seldom change their decisions because of a philosophical argument but well-reasoned examples carry tremendous weight.
- Provide background as needed. Don't assume that a legislator is as well informed as you about a problem. A legislator can't keep abreast of everything. Explain the situation, what you think and why.
- Make specific recommendations.
- Keep it positive. Your attitude is important. A polite, positive-sounding letter is more likely to impress than one that is negative, rude, or threatening. Avoid being antagonistic. Point out the benefits of your position.
- Use KNEA Resources. It is a great idea to check the "Talking Points" section of the leader site or visit the "Legislative" information section of the KNEA website to get valuable support and rationale for education issues.
- Close with a friendly appeal, regardless of the action you urge.
- Allow for follow-up. Include contact information and offer to act as a resource should the legislator (or staff) have questions or need additional information. Where appropriate, indicate in the letter that you will follow up with a phone call.

Format & process:

- Correct address. Use the correct name and address for your legislator.
- Follow etiquette. Addressing correspondence to legislators requires particular etiquette. Every legislator is called "Honorable" on the envelope and inside address. In the salutation, address house members as "Dear Representative _____" while senators are called "Senator _____." Spell the name correctly. During a legislative session, send correspondence to their office, otherwise send to home or business.
- Return address information. For letters, be certain that your name and address are on the envelope and letter.
- Reference bills by number. Refer to all bills by name and number when possible.
- Write legibly or type. Make sure to use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Do not depend on spell check or grammar check to catch all errors.
- End cordially. Thank them for their help and consideration. "Sincerely," is an appropriate closing.
- Follow up thanks. Send a note of appreciation if your legislator supports your issue or a note of disappointment if they do not support the issue. If they send information you request, also send a note of thanks.
- Don't give up. To be truly effective, sending more than one letter during a session is a good idea.

KNEA — HOW TO WRITE YOUR LEGISLATOR

Using E-Mail

E-mail can be an easy and effective tool for communicating with legislators. The tips above for letters also generally apply to sending e-mails. In addition, e-mails should:

- Avoid informal language. E-mail to a legislator should be treated as seriously as a traditional (snail-mail) letter. Resist the temptation to use the informal language and symbols often associated with e-mail communications. Never use impolite language or make "demands."
- Include your full address and zip code. Make sure the text of your e-mail includes your full name and street address, including zip code. Many legislative offices at the federal level screen e-mails for address information identifying the sender as a constituent. E-mails that may appear to come from outside the district are unlikely to be read and might be blocked by filtering programs.

Addressing written correspondence:

For U.S. Senators

The Honorable (full name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
Dear Senator (last name):

For members of the U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable (full name)
United States House of
Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
Dear Representative
(last name):

For State Legislators:

The Honorable (full name)
State Capitol
Topeka, KS 66612
Dear Senator (last name):
or
Dear Representative
(last name):

KNEA — HOW TO PHONE YOUR LEGISLATOR

To find your legislator's phone number, you can call **1-785-296-0111**. During the legislative session you may also leave messages for members of the legislature by dialing **1-800-432-3924**. Hours of operation are 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM on days when the legislature is in session. When leaving a message for a legislator, please follow these guidelines:

- Identify yourself to the person who answers the phone. Be sure to say that you are a school district resident and a constituent in the legislator's district.
- Tell the legislator the issue or bill number you're calling about. Give the position and reason for your position.
- Briefly explain the likely impact of a bill on your school district and on the legislator's constituents.
- Be polite.
- Keep party politics out of the discussion.
- Say, "thank you" for your legislator's consideration of your views.
- If the legislator is unavailable, give the staff member your message. Legislative staff are very good at relaying messages!

From the "NEA Educators' Guide to Lobbying"

<http://www.knea.org/home/316.htm>

There is plenty of information on any topic

Kansas National Education Association - KNEA - <http://www.knea.org/home/22.htm>

Kansas Values Institute - www.kansasvaluesinstitute.org

Right now, outsiders and special interest groups are working to change the foundation of our state - the foundation that was built by the blood and sweat of the generations that came before us. These special interest groups are more interested in gimmicks and quick fixes that places like Texas, Florida and Washington, DC have tried to employ. If you like the way Washington is being run, our movement isn't for you. But, if you are tired of the political nonsense, join us. There is nothing wrong with this state that cannot be fixed by what is right with our state. We need a Kansas solution.

Kansas Health Institute - *KHI* - www.khi.org

News feed - www.khi.org/news

Research and policy briefs in health reform, community health improvement, health impact assessment, access to care, Medicaid/CHIP, public health systems and services, news briefs

Kansas Action for Children - KAC - www.kac.org

Seeks improvements in public policy and public systems that address the needs and rights of children in Kansas. Media center, advocacy tools, and legislative advocacy in health, education and economic policy effecting children and families. Intro to Advocacy downloadable at <http://kac.org/take-action/toolkit/>.

KNEA — TWELVE LOBBYING TIPS

Lobbying is simply an attempt to persuade someone to accept your point of view through the sharing of information. What follows are some additional tips to help you present your case effectively.

1. Be informed.

The most effective lobbyist is one who is well informed about both the issues to be discussed and the member of the legislature, his/her voting record, background, and constituent concerns within the district.

2. Be prepared.

Have data - three kinds of data are preferred: general statewide data, data specific to your district and your personal story. Your story is most important. Explain what is happening to children and professionals in the classrooms in your school and district. Know your position and the rationale for that position.

3. Be friendly.

Don't let persuasion turn into a threat.

4. Be open.

Be prepared to listen and to speak. But be sure you structure the meeting so you have an opportunity to do both.

5. Be calm.

The better prepared you are in terms of having background information and rationale for a position, the better you will be able to maintain a professional demeanor.

6. Give examples.

Most members of the legislature are not educators by profession, so the more examples you can give of the impact of legislation on students, professionals, and schools within your own district, the more persuasive your arguments will be.

7. Don't argue.

If you find yourself in a disagreement with your member of the legislature, don't get embroiled in an argument. Your responsibility is to present your case, not necessarily to win your case.

8. Don't apologize.

Never apologize or undercut your position. Remember you are speaking for your school and your children.

9. Don't get sidetracked.

Don't let listening to the legislator's point of view turn into getting sidetracked on to other issues. If a member of the legislature puts you on the defensive or asks you to prioritize among positions, don't let yourself agree to negative statements about a position or make seat-of-the-pants selections among education priorities.

10. Don't be afraid to admit that you don't know.

Some legislators may intentionally attempt to deal with issues that you do not have a solid grounding in. Some may ask specific questions for which you have no answers. If you're not sure of an answer, say, "I'll check and get back to you." Then, follow up - get in touch with KNEA and find out the answer and let your legislator know what the answer was.

11. Find common ground.

Even if a legislator does not support the position you are presenting, he/she probably believes in the value of public education. But if he/she doesn't even believe in that, every legislator still has the responsibility of attending to the concerns of all his/her constituents.

12. Don't give up.

Continue to keep your legislator informed about the impact of an issue, even after it has passed. If they voted to support a program that works, let them know how it works. If they opposed a program that was successful, let them know it works. If they opposed a program that wasn't enacted, let them know the need still exists.

KNEA — TEN GOLDEN RULES OF LOBBYING

1. Politics is Consumer Driven. Help your legislator understand why your position is important to his or her constituents. Fight where the legislator lives through grassroots organizations at home.
2. Do Your Homework. Know your stuff. Understand your issue, the bill you support or oppose, and the legislative process before you approach your legislator. Know who the players are, who decides what, and which issues are hot at the moment.
3. Information is Power. The secret is the distribution of information to legislators and their constituents. Be prepared to give the legislator information he or she can use, including what you are hearing from other legislators and from people back home.
4. A Little Professionalism Goes a Long Way. Be credible, honest, and trustworthy. Never threaten, lie, or conceal facts. Stay calm - if you lose your cool, you lose the case.
5. Be Positive. Always make your case without being critical of others' personalities or motives.
6. There are No Permanent Friends and No Permanent Enemies. Don't take your traditional friends for granted. Never write off a legislator just because of past voting record or party affiliation. Don't make enemies of legislators - you may need them as friends in the future
7. Build a Bond, Not a Gap. Research things you might have in common with the legislator. Use shared values to create easy, friendly, frequent communication with legislators.
8. Be a Partner. Build coalitions and look for allies among other organizations. Be accessible to legislators and other lobbyists if they have questions or need follow-up information. Become known as a reliable source.
9. Rome Wasn't Built in a Day. Aim for consensus rather for "victory." Be willing to settle for making progress toward your goal, getting the bill passed, and fine tuning it in future sessions.
10. Stay Committed. Remember - you are the expert!! You have a compelling, energizing reason to keep fighting until you get what you need.

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