

ADVOCACY BEST PRACTICES

From United Way's Public Policy Committee members

March 8, 2013

Compliment your legislator on something he/she did right.

Listen to the legislator's issues of interest and send a "thank you" note that keys in on that topic. All the staff who open the mail will see it.

Propose revenue-neutral legislation that is easy for a legislator to support.

In email, specify your district. Take a person from the district on the visit and let that constituent send the "thank you" note.

Customize statistics, if possible, by zip code or legislator's district.

Assist your legislator on a project, in the office (such as stuffing mailers) or in the community (such as walking the block or registering voters). While side by side, discuss the issues you care about informally.

Get to know the legislators and their staff. Read the legislator's biography before your visit. Engage their legislative staff in research and writing. Send the constituent services staff in the district office information about populations you care about, such as veterans or children.

Engage and educate board members whose work involves government relations so they can readily talk about your legislative issues.

Follow your legislators' votes on particular bills. Thank them if they voted on issues you support; let them know you're disappointed if they do not.

Remember to invite legislators to public events – groundbreakings, award ceremonies, check presentations, etc. - where you can provide them visibility.