

Grassroots Networking tips: Following Up

Following up with your legislator after a conversation or meeting is imperative. Legislators and legislative assistants tend to focus their attention on constituents who are persistent without being pests. It may be that your request has been placed on the “back burner” inadvertently and a simple follow-up action spurs action. These follow-up opportunities may be just what’s needed to keep your legislator’s attention and prompt them to act.

Send a Thank-You Note

A simple, but highly effective way to keep a legislator’s attention. A hand-written, personal note makes an impact. If time is of the essence, an email works too. Consider including your business card, especially if your signature is not very legible.

Build Coalitions

When appropriate, working in a coalition can increase your message’s visibility with legislators. Further, it can increase your political capital through relationships, experience and political insights.

Work with Local Media

Legislators review many media outlets on a daily basis to keep the pulse of their districts. Local media is especially important because it offers direct insights into constituent values and interests. Consider writing an Op-Ed or Letter to the Editor, or contact local TV and radio reporters to share story ideas and issues of interest.

Connect through Social Media

Many legislators use social media as a way to monitor public opinion and share their efforts with the public. Check your legislators’ websites for links to social media accounts. Follow them on Twitter, Facebook, etc. and subscribe to their blog feeds and/or newsletters. Comment, like and tag their posts as they are relevant to your interests. Avoid confrontation on social media.

Participate in Town Hall Meetings

Town Hall-style meetings are a great way to connect with legislators. Remember that social media is often an outlet for publicizing these events.

Make Relationship-Building Requests

One way to keep your legislator’s attention and build a valuable relationship is to make periodic requests throughout the year. Invite the legislator to special town functions, offer speaking opportunities, and request meetings to keep them informed about and engaged in local issues, etc.