TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH LEGISLATORS AND THEIR STAFF

Legislators serve many constituents and address a wide range of policy issues. Here are some important points to keep in mind when communicating with legislators.

1. **Remember that Legislators and Their Staff are Human Beings**
   - Conversations should not be argumentative or confrontational.
   - In advocacy, respectful relationships build the foundation for change.

2. **Share Personal Stories**
   - Personal stories are extremely powerful and are often remembered.
   - Keep stories very brief (under two minutes) and tied to legislation and policy issues.

3. **Identify Yourself as a Constituent**
   - Let your legislator know that you live in their district and identify yourself as a constituent.
   - Legislators are more likely to focus on issues pertaining to their district and constituents.

4. **Increase Number of Communications**
   - Advocates should craft key messages and consider asking friends and family to help in contacting legislators on important issues.
   - The more communications a legislator receives about an issue the more likely they will act.

5. **Repeat Your Main Points**
   - The frequency legislators hear about an issue plays a role in whether they favor a cause.

6. **Keep Materials Brief, Straightforward, and Simple**
   - When sharing printed materials with a legislator, try to keep it to a one-page, bulleted fact sheet that reinforces the key points on the issue.
   - Lengthy materials are often not read.

7. **Clearly Communicate What You are Asking for**
   - Be specific on the action you want taken, such as support for a bill or policy.
   - Stay informed on where legislators stand on issues and actions they have taken.

8. **Follow Up**
   - Thank legislators when they support the issue or take a public stance on it.

9. **Share Media Coverage**
   - If a media story covers an issue you have previously raised with the legislator, share a copy of the article and remind them about the previous communication on the topic.

10. **Take Notes**
    - Keep a record of your communications to maintain dialogues and foster relationships.