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## The Basics of Successful Lobbying

State and federal legislators are faced with hundreds of important issues to decide, and little time to master them all. When you meet with them, they'll want to know (1) why the issue is important to many of their constituents, (2) whether there is sufficient need for them to take some action, and (3) if there is something concrete they can do, preferably something that doesn't involve spending money.

Here are some tips from our professional lobbying advisors:

**Set up your meeting in advance.** While you can always confront a legislator at a public meeting or in the hallway, it's not the best way to get your message through or build a relationship. Be polite but persistent in asking for a meeting. Don't be disappointed if your meeting is with a senior staff person - it's their job to know the issue, and you'll generally find they listen better than the legislators themselves!

**Be prepared.** Before your meeting, decide and agree on what outcome you want and can reasonably expect, what issues are most important, and who is going to speak. Show up a few minutes early for your appointment, dress appropriately (business attire is preferred), and have your backup and reference materials with you.

**Who are you? Why are you here? What do you want?** The answers to these three simple questions will help determine the success of your meeting.

- *Who are you?* Make sure you set the groundwork for your meeting by establishing the credibility of your organization or group. Make it clear you are constituents (or represent constituents), and that you are part of a larger network of like-minded groups across the nation.
- *Why are you here?* Here's where you'll need a brief overview of the 5G issue and the particular reason for your visit. Share the presentation among all the members of the group. Avoid too much detail... leave time for questions. Part of the art of lobbying is *listening* carefully, and watching for indications of the legislator's views.

- *What do you want?* This is where you should have a specific ask of your legislator. Don't be afraid to be bold - remember, these people work for you. For instance, "*We would like Senator Smith to write a letter to the FCC asking them to justify its claims that 5G is completely safe.*"

**You don't need to be an expert**, especially when it comes to technological issues. Tell your personal stories and relate them to those of your neighbors and friends. If you are asked a technical question you can't answer, don't be afraid to say "I don't know," and offer to follow up with the information requested if you can.

**Don't stay too long.** Watch the clock, be very respectful of their time, and above all don't keep talking and pressing your point once you have clearly reached the end of the meeting. Remember you are there to build a relationship and want to be welcomed back. Remember to get a photo before you leave.

**Don't get mad.** Even if the legislator doesn't agree to your request or voices skepticism, avoid confrontation. Eventually she/he may be persuaded of the merits of your position. In the meantime, they will know there is an organized and growing opposition, and over time they may moderate their own views.

**Follow-up is important.** Make sure you send a thank-you note after the visit, both to the person you met with, and the person who arranged the meeting. Post a picture of your meeting on social media and tag your legislator.

***Good luck!***