

## **The Democracy Center - Citizen Action Series**

Excerpts from *The Democracy Owners Manual*  
(To preview or purchase the book visit [www.democracyctr.org](http://www.democracyctr.org))

### **Lobbying – the Basics**

Effective citizen lobbying involves not only talking with public officials, but building broad coalitions, working with the media, mobilizing grassroots pressure, changing public opinion, undermining your opposition, and much, much more.

#### **Know The Legislative Process**

Begin by understanding how bills get written and considered by your legislature, city council, or whatever body you are targeting. Know the rules of committee hearings, legislative floors debates, the budget process, and of the executive branch.

#### **Get Your Allies Together**

Effective lobbying is a team effort and at the start of any lobbying campaign it is important to put together the coalition of support that you will need to win. Seek to build a coalition which is diverse and which brings together the array of different contacts, skills and resources you'll need.

#### **Do Your Homework**

Research the issue thoroughly. Know all the essential facts, both about the policy involved and the politics. Prepare informational material for your allies and supporters to help educate them as well. Prepare your arguments and messages. Know your opposition's arguments and how to refute them. Know their weak spots and how to exploit them. Figure out if there is the possibility of compromise and whether it is worth it.

#### **Pick Your Lobbying Targets and Go to Work**

The public officials you might wish to influence fall into very different categories. Some will already be with you, some you will never win over, and most will likely be somewhere in the middle. It is the ones in the middle you need to focus on most. Once you know your targets, lobby them with visits, letters, and calls from their constituents.

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