

ADVOCACY AAUW NC



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Why advocate?

- •Being a Representative or Senator is a PART TIME job in NC!
- •We are the experts on the issues affecting women and girls.
- •We can relay messages of problems going on in specific legislative districts (our communities).
- •We can help influence decision making because we know how to look at an issue from a community perspective.

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•We are the constituents



- •We are the voters
- •Legislators are in office to represent their districts and **we** need to have a voice in the representation.

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How can you influence legislation?

- •Help write a bill/draft language to an issue
- •Attend a committee meeting to speak on behalf of the bill OR provide your legislator with information to share at a committee meeting
- •Write a letter or email to your legislator; schedule an in person meeting or talk on the phone
- •Educate others that should be involved on the issue

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Lobbying Dos

- 1.DO be TRUTHFUL. You want to gain respect from the legislator.
- **2.DO** relate the issue to the specific district of the legislator–present the need.
- **3.DO** show knowledge on both sides of the issue.
- **4.DO** admit if you do not know the answer. Respond that you will get back with the legislator as soon as possible and get the accurate information.
- **5.DO** show interest in getting to know the legislator's staff.
- **6.DO** follow up the visit with a thank you note, email or phone call.

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Lobbying Don'ts

- 1.DON'T LIE.
- **2.DON'T** be disrespectful to the legislator who does not agree with your position.
- 3.DON'T argue with the legislator.
- **4.DON'T** overload the legislator with too much information. General rule of thumb- one visit, one issue.
- $\ensuremath{\text{5.DON'T}}$ let the conversation get sidetracked from the point. Keep everyone on topic.
- **6.DON'T** assume they know the issue you are talking about. Give them ALL the information, even if it seems redundant.

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When discussing an issue...



- Be able to answer:
- -Why are you here?
- -What is your message?
- -Find out the legislator's position on an issue
- · -Leave information
- -DON'T BE NERVOUS

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How do I advocate?

- •Visit your legislators- both in Raleigh and back in your district
- Phone calls
- Email
- Hand write a letter
- Join other groups and coalitions that fight to make a difference

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How will the legislator respond?

- · One of three ways:
- -Supportive- offer to be present at meetings or provide more information. Ask what YOU can do for THEM on this issue
- -Opposed- listen to their points, share your points and find common ground. They may consider your opinion and lessen their opposition.
- On the fence- what you say may influence their decision. Ask how you can help formulate their votegive more info, share stories, follow up with an email, etc.

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Thank you notes

- After every legislative visit, you should follow up with a thank you note
- •You can write out the note and leave with the legislator BEFORE you leave or send when you return home

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If the legislator is not there

- · Reschedule an appointment
- Leave material/information with a staff member
- Or schedule a phone call
- Confirm the rescheduled appointment prior to the date

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Find more about your representatives:

- www.ncleg.net > Who Represents Me (enter your address in the House and Senate maps, click in the map to select the indicated district, and then click the "open member page"
- You can also find your districts at the <u>State Board of Elections > Voter Lookup</u> page. Then use the <u>House Member List</u> and <u>Senate Member List</u> to get the member names and links to the page with their contact info, voting records, and more.
- Once you have the representatives' names, the "View Member Info" dropdown at the top of www.ncleg.net is your gateway to more information about them.

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Summary

- Find out about AAUW Issues by going to <u>www.aauw.org/issues/</u>
- Find out what's happening in the NC Legislature
- Study the issues and be brief
- Make an appointment with the legislator
- Make the visit, ADVOCATE, and write a "thank you" note
- Keep in touch with the home office and attend Advocacy Day in Raleigh

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