



## Tips for Successful Citizen Lobbyists

Lobbying is simply an attempt to persuade someone to accept your point of view through the sharing of information. What follows are some additional tips to help you present your case effectively.

**Be informed.** The most effective lobbyist is one who is well informed. You can visit Equality Maryland's legislative page to learn more about our current efforts:  
<http://www.equalitymaryland.org/legislation/legislative.htm>.

**Be prepared.** Being prepared means different things for different people. You are there to tell your personal story and share your thoughts. Why is equality important to you? Your loved ones and your community. Know your position and the rationale for that position.

It helps to spend a few minutes talking with the folks who are going into the meeting with you to discuss who has a story to share and make sure you plan it out a bit. Your District Coordinator can help with this.

**Give examples.** Many members of the legislature may not personally know someone from the LGBT community or may not have thought a lot about equality issues, so the more examples you can give of the impact of legislation on real people within your own district, the more persuasive your arguments will be.

**Don't argue.** If you find yourself in a disagreement with your member of the legislature, don't get embroiled in an argument. Your responsibility is to present your case, not necessarily to win everyone over that night. We will keep it up. We have new sponsors and allies every year! We have to be in this together for the long haul.

**Don't get sidetracked.** Don't let listening to the legislator's point of view turn into getting sidetracked on to other issues. If a member of the legislature puts you on the defensive or asks you to prioritize among positions, don't let yourself agree to negative statements about a position or make seat-of-the-pants selections among Equality Maryland priorities.

**Don't be afraid to admit that you don't know.** Some legislators may intentionally attempt to deal with issues that you do not have a solid grounding in. Some may ask specific questions for which you have no answers. If you're not sure of an answer, say, "I'll check and get back to you." Then, follow up. Get in touch with Equality Maryland and find out the answer and let your legislator know what the answer was.

**Don't give up.** Continue to keep your legislator informed about the impact of an issue, even after it has passed. If they voted to support a bill that works, let them know how it works. If they opposed a piece of legislation that really made a difference in your life or the life of your loved ones, let them know it. If they opposed a bill that wasn't enacted, let them know the need still exists!

***If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to contact us at [info@equalitymaryland.org](mailto:info@equalitymaryland.org) or 410-685-6567.***