

# THINGS TO REMEMBER

## 1 YOUR LEGISLATOR WORKS FOR YOU

## 2 WE CAN BE A RESOURCE

- Let us know about your meeting beforehand to see if we have information or materials you can use.
- After the meeting, let us know how it went. Your conversations as a constituent can be critical in helping our legislative priorities move forward and giving us valuable insight.

## BONUS TIPS

### 1 TRY, TRY AGAIN

- Email, call their office, write letters, visit them in person.
- It may take multiple attempts to connect with your lawmaker, especially during the legislative session. Don't take it personally, and don't give up. If you don't get a response, follow-up and try another way!

### 2 LEVERAGE SOCIAL MEDIA

- Get visual: share a photo and tag your legislator. For example: "Thank you @legislator for meeting with me about #LGBTQRights! #KsLeg" or "Please vote NO on HB \_\_\_ and protect our vote, @[legislator]. #KsLeg".
- Engage and interact. Post your own content, or respond to your legislator's posts thoughtfully. To increase the chance a legislator responds: avoid being extremely negative or attacking; identify yourself as a constituent; and say thank you when appropriate.

# A KANSAN'S LOBBYING 101 TOOLKIT

A Guide to Best Practices for  
Engaging Your Elected Officials

**ACLU**  
Kansas

**#KSLEG**

# PREPARE & SHOW UP

## 1 KNOW YOUR LEGISLATOR

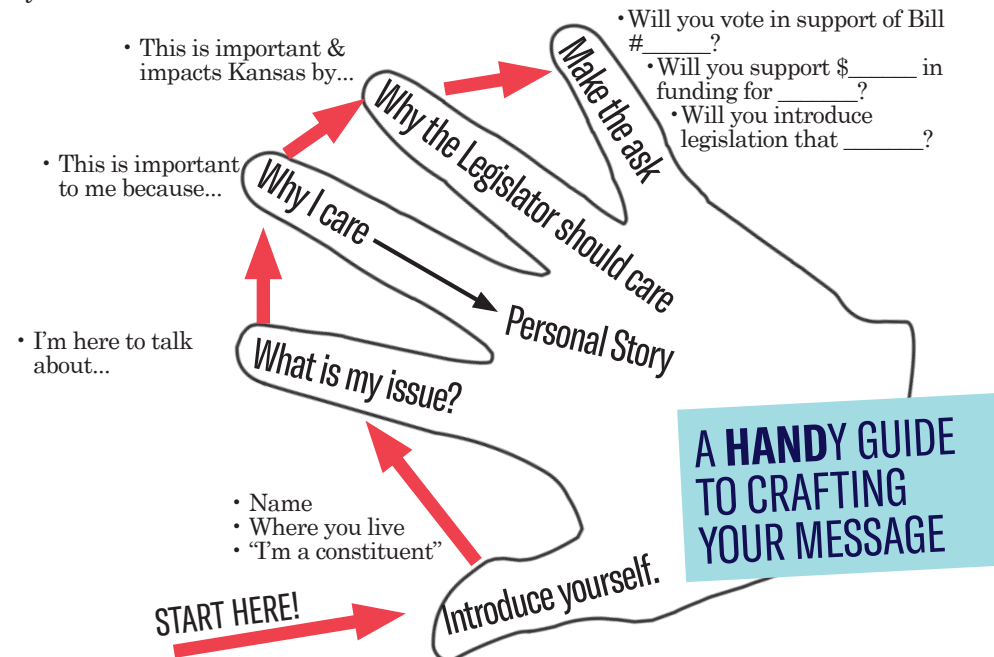
First do some research to ensure you know your legislator(s). What's their professional background? Do you have shared experiences or interests? Knowing more about your legislator can help you understand their context and build the relationship to talk with them about the issues that matter to you.

- Find your legislator at [www.kslegislature.org](http://www.kslegislature.org).
- Focus on the legislators representing your district or those who sit on committees for the issues you care about.
- Find them on social media or visit their campaign websites, both of which can tell you about their priorities.

## 2 WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW

Your experience makes you an expert—you do not have to be a policy expert to speak on and advocate for issues that matter to you. Before you reach out to your legislator, figure out how you can integrate your story with the issue to make your case.

- Visit the ACLU of Kansas' website throughout the session for insight on bills we're working on and talking points for legislation we support or oppose.
- Familiarize yourself with the talking points before contacting your elected official—the more you know, the more your legislator can learn, too.
- Share your personal story and how a particular issue may impact (or may have impacted) you or a loved one. Our Handy Guide to Crafting Your Message can help you do this!



## 3 GET ORGANIZED

If you're meeting with your legislator in a group, be sure you all have a unified message and an agreed-upon agenda beforehand.

- Agree on talking points so you can make a strong case together.
- Decide the structure: Who will start the meeting? Who will talk on which points?
- Decide your goal. Do you want your legislator to vote for or against a bill, or introduce or co-sponsor legislation? Be specific in what you ask for, decide who will ask for it, and you'll be able to determine how successful your visit has been.

## 4 OWN YOUR MEETING

This is your meeting, so it's up to you to keep it focused.

- **Be prompt and patient.** Show up on time and understand that elected officials run on tight schedules. It is not uncommon for legislators to run late or be interrupted by other business.
- **Start by introducing yourselves**, bringing up any personal, professional, or political connections you may have to the elected official. Thank them for any votes they have made in support of your issues and for taking time to meet with you.
- **Keep it short and focused.** Stick to your talking points, and provide personal and local examples of the impact of the legislation or issue.
- **Don't be afraid to say "I don't know"** - making up an answer to a question can seriously damage your credibility. If you don't have an answer, tell your legislator you will find it.
- **Leave behind supporting materials** with no more than five pages.
- **Set a deadline for a response.** If the legislator has not taken a position yet, they likely won't commit to one in a meeting. If they need time, ask when you should check back to find out what they decide to do with your request.

## 5 FOLLOW UP

You did it! But you're not done. Think about next steps to ensure you make the impact you want.

- Right after your meeting, compare notes with everyone in your group about what the elected official committed to do and any follow-up information you committed to send. Clarify any points of differing interpretations.
- Each person should send a personal thank-you letter to the elected official.
- Follow up in a timely manner with any requested materials or information.
- If the elected official or staff member does not meet the agreed upon deadline, follow up again. You may have to start this process over - and bring more constituents with you next time around.