

COMMUNICATING IN PERSON

Do:

- ✓ Be polite and courteous.
- ✓ Be clear and to the point.
- ✓ Know the issue and give a brief overview of the legislation.
- ✓ Know the reasons for supporting the SCAC position.
- ✓ Seek a specific commitment.
- ✓ If asked a question you cannot answer, say you will find out or have SCAC staff follow up with the answer.
- ✓ Keep the door open for future contact.

Don't:

- ✗ Be argumentative or threatening.
- ✗ Be evasive.
- ✗ Support the issue because “someone told me to.”
- ✗ Assume the legislator knows what you're talking about.
- ✗ Be caught off guard or unprepared to answer questions.
- ✗ Exaggerate or go beyond what you know to be absolutely true.
- ✗ Interpret a lawmaker's unwillingness to make a specific commitment as opposition.

KEYS TO CRAFTING A SUCCESSFUL MESSAGE

- Be accurate.
 - Don't exaggerate or distort your facts or the other side's position.
- Keep your message brief.
- Tell the lawmaker something new.
- Always have a story that relates to the issue you are discussing.
- If you are a registered voter in the legislator's district, say so.

ALWAYS

- Follow up.
 - A letter or email to express your appreciation and summarize your understanding of the result should follow meetings or other verbal discussions. If you were asked to provide additional information, do so promptly.
- Keep SCAC staff and your county council informed of your efforts and results.
- Subscribe to the Friday Report and SCAC alerts to stay updated on legislation affecting counties. Visit sccounties.org/email



SOUTH CAROLINA
ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES



TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

You—county officials—are key voices and can have a tremendous positive impact on the legislative process. Legislators want your opinions, insight and real-life experiences on issues that directly affect you and your county.

Here are some general tips to assist you when communicating with state legislators on behalf of the SC Association of Counties and your own county. Remember, SCAC staff are always available to assist you.


COMMUNICATING IN WRITING

Do:

- ✓ Make sure to include the bill number and its current status.
- ✓ Be sincere.
- ✓ Say what you want in your own words.

Don't:

- ✗ Assume that the legislator knows about the bill or its status.
- ✗ Copy a form letter.
- ✗ Attempt to cover several issues in a single letter.

 **Pro tip:** Familiarize yourself with a lawmaker's personal interests and concerns prior to formal contact.


SETTING UP A MEETING

Do:

- ✓ Schedule an appointment in advance.
- ✓ Understand meetings scheduled in Columbia during session may be delayed by developments beyond the legislator's control.
- ✓ Identify the reason for your meeting in advance. This will allow lawmakers and staff an opportunity to be better prepared.

Don't:

- ✗ Show up unannounced and expect a meeting on the spot.

 **Pro tip:** Face to face visits with lawmakers in their home districts are very effective.



MEETING WITH A LEGISLATOR DURING SESSION IN THE STATE HOUSE LOBBY

During session, sometimes the best opportunity to speak with a legislator is in the State House lobby.

To contact a lawmaker to get them to come out into the lobby, use these email addresses to send your request: SenateChamber@scsenate.gov and Housepage@schouse.gov.

If an important issue is being debated on the floor, or if the legislator is preparing to speak, it may take some time for a legislator to come out after receiving the request.

SCAC staff are available to assist you when trying to meet a legislator at the State House.