

# Building Relationships with Elected Officials

**A PRESENTATION** 

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First Vice-Chairman, House Committee on Finance
Member, House Finance Subcommittee on General Government
Member, House Committee on Labor
Member, House Committee on Rules

Former Chairman of the Bristol Town Council

## Who Are YOU

- What are your Core beliefs
- What is your motivation
- Are you really a team player
- What are your passions
- Are you a creative thinker
- Can you easily admit you made a mistake
- Can you share accomplishments and credit



# Goals and Objectives



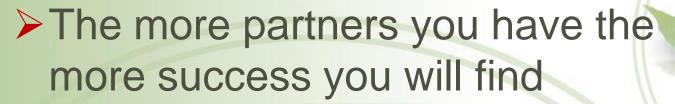
- > What do you want to accomplish & why
  - 1. Define your vision
  - 2. Who will benefit
  - 3. Likely partners the more the merrier
  - 4. Strength is conveyed in numbers
- Politics is about relationships
  - Make yourself aware of all your politicians and their staff
  - 2. Family Friends Interests Platforms
  - 3. They are Public Servants they chose this to do good for there communities.

"Make friends when you don't need them so that you will have them when you do need them." . . .Lyndon Johnson

- Write a congratulatory letter to newly elected officials
- Know their backgrounds, committees on which they serve, what they did before running for office.
- > Become familiar with their views (Platforms)
- Genuinely take an interest in helping them fulfill their goals
- DON'T be a telemarketer (they will hang up on you in many different ways)

- > Be at events where you know
- they will be in attendance
- Invite them to be at your programs and involve them.
- Then give them all the credit you don't need credit or votes – They do!
- Send the elected official and the staff member who accompanies them a follow up note, thanking them for the visit

You can catch more flies with honey then you can with a fly swatter





- Don't get stuck mix it up show your personality – laugh - tell a few jokes - relax
- ALL WAYS be positive, don't let yourself get a negative reputation. It will spread like wildfire.
- ➤ Look for the "Win Win" solution
- Remember there is always a desirable solution to your problem.
- > Build on successes

"You can get anything you want in life if you just help enough other people get what they want."





# Do's and Don'ts

#### Do's

- Clearly identify the subject of interest, including current
   Be rude or threatening House and Senate bill numbers if applicable to the discussion
- Explain your connection to the issue and its impact on you, their community, or health
- Write legibly and concisely
- Try to determine the Member's position [or likely position] on similar issues
- Use personal experiences in outlining your position and concerns
- Use your own business or personal stationary
- Communicate actively when legislation is under consideration in a committee, conference or on the floor of the House or Senate
- Write more than once on the same issue, especially if the legislation or activity changes (favorably or otherwise) and note what impact those changes will have
- Write to the appropriate committee and subcommittee chairmen responsible for the legislation when you have information that will help the committees' deliberations (copy your representative and/or senators as appropriate)

#### Don'ts

- Promise something you cannot deliver
- Be self-righteous or overbearing
- Pretend to have more influence or power than you truly have
- Be vague about the issue present facts that can support or refute the Member's position or responses.
- Forget to thank the Member for past assistance and support
- Bring up past campaign contributions or present a check during a meeting (this should be restricted to specific fundraising events]



## **Politicians**

Have families and friends and do what they do for very little compensation. There motivation is love of community and RI



- ✓ Generally have no formal training for their governmental positions
- ✓ They are fast learners and very intuitive
- Tend to be short term focused
- ✓ But have long term focused interests environmental – jobs – economic development – education etc. etc.
- ✓ They are multi-taskers They can focus on more then one issue
- Serve the interests of those who elected them

Don't like to be surprised or embarrassed



- Expect us to be problem solvers
- ✓ Don't like technical jargon
- Want to be informed on an ongoing bases
- Should be appreciated thanked and credited
- ✓ They like "White Papers" with bullets
- Held accountable by voters

### Remember...

- Positive messages work so be positive!
- Connect to your <u>core values</u> and explain why is it so important to you, your family, your city and/or your state.
- ↓ Listen; Listen; Listen
- ♣ Be the "Go To" guy

## Reasons to be hopeful!

- You can make a difference.
- People working together can make a difference.
- ♣ People can change laws/policies.
- Advocacy is an American tradition.
- Advocacy helps find real solutions.
- Policymakers need your expertise.
- Advocacy helps people.

