

A CALL to ACTION!

Now Is the Time to Meet with Your Legislators And Get Involved in Political Campaigns

The Texas Legislature will convene its Regular Session in January 2015. The Texas Construction Association will again be promoting a strong legislative agenda on behalf of the construction industry. The success of TCA's legislative agenda will be dependent on our members' involvement



in educating their state senators and state representatives about the issues that affect their day-to-day lives and their businesses and how the legislative agenda issues will affect their business and employees.

The advocacy work carried out on the local level when our members meet and talk with their elected officials is paramount to the success of the TCA legislative agenda. This local-level work is known as grassroots legislative advocacy and it is the most basic form of taking your case to your elected official and asking for his or her support to advocate for you. This kind of constituent advocacy is the most important work that members of an association can do to promote the passage of or the defeat of legislative initiatives impacting their lives and their businesses. Constituent input is the most pure form of advocacy that exists in the political process. When a grassroots advocacy program is embraced and carried out by members of an association, the success of that association's legislative agenda is more likely to be realized.

In addition, during the months leading up to the General Elections on November 4, 2014, another important form of grassroots advocacy is for constituents to volunteer their time and talents to help with their legislators' political campaigns. Campaign volunteers, among other things, put up yard signs, assist with phone banks and block walk to handout campaign material. You may volunteer for a few hours of work or, if you have the time, you may want to volunteer for more hours to help with a campaign. All you need to do is call your local candidate/legislator's campaign office and tell the staff that you want to do volunteer work for the campaign. Your offer of your time will be very welcome to the campaign and will be remembered by your legislator.

The following is a basic how to guide to set up a meeting with and

what to do when you meet with your legislator. Keep in mind, when you meet with your Senator or Representative it will be similar to a marketing meeting with another business person. The other person in the meeting just happens to be a legislator and you happen to be a constituent that lives or works in his or her legislative district. You are marketing your issues to the legislator. Make a sale!

Overview

- The purpose of meeting with your legislator is to build a relationship with him or her so that you can easily contact that member when issues important to you are being considered by the Texas Legislature.
- Your mission for your meeting is to convey to your legislator what issue(s) you are passionate about and most effect you and your business.

- Remember that you and your business are important to your legislator-your legislator works for you, not the other way around.
- Your meeting with your legislator is about you and your interests.
- Talking about your issue or issues will help you to relax and speak from your heart without memorizing a lot of information.
- Connect your issue to personal experience. If possible, talk about others who have been harmed by situations that have arisen related to this issue. Connect this as a jobs issue. It costs you money.
- Prior to your meeting, familiarize yourself with TCA's legislative agenda in case your legislator asks you questions about any of those issues.

The Basics of Setting Up a Meeting With Your Legislator

- Call the senator's or representative's district office and ask to schedule an appointment with your legislator at his or her earliest convenience.
- Identify yourself as a constituent – either because of where you reside or where your business is located (or both).
- Tell the legislator's staff person that you only need 15-30 minutes of your legislator's time.
- Ask the legislator's staff person what would be the easiest way for the legislator to meet with you-at the district office, for breakfast, for coffee or for lunch.
- The staff person you are talking to may ask if it would be all right for you to meet with a legislative staff person instead of the legislator.

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