

TIPS FOR LOBBYING

Voices for Creative Nonviolence is initiating a nationwide Peaceable Assembly Campaign which seeks an end to the U.S. wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan and an end to U.S. support of the continued occupation of the Palestinian territories. Beginning in September, 2009, and continuing for the next ten months, we will engage in both legal and extralegal (nonviolent civil disobedience/civil resistance) lobbying efforts, urging Representatives and Senators to stop authorizing and funding wars and occupations. www.peaceableassemblycampaign.org

THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOUR MEETINGS

- 1) Meet with everyone who is participating in the meeting. Rehearse your talking points and messages. Have someone role play the Member of Congress or staff person and ask difficult questions.
- 2) Prepare a Peaceable Assembly Campaign packet. Make sure that you have enough copies of all materials to be left with Members of Congress or their staff, including information on your local group, Peaceable Assembly Campaign literature and petitions, copies of relevant legislation, talking points, reports, etc.
- 3) Invite a diverse constituency of people to attend the meeting.
- 4) Get to know the legislator's background through research. What have they said and how have they voted on the issues you are lobbying about? What are their main legislative priorities, who are they beholden to and what committees do they serve on?
- 5) Understand the legislative process. Here are a few things you can certainly ask your representative to do:
 - Write, cosponsor, whip and champion legislation
 - Floor speeches
 - Committee work, including hearings
 - Press events, Op-eds, etc.
 - Letters to the Administration and other government officials
 - Congressional or Staff Delegations

THINGS TO DO AT YOUR MEETINGS

- 1) Be on time.
- 2) Allow each member of your affinity group to briefly introduce her/himself, your local activist organizations, and the Peaceable Assembly Campaign.
- 3) State accurately how many people you represent and how many PAC petitions you have signed. Don't over-inflate your numbers.
- 4) Make your "ask" up front. This is the most important part of the meeting and the reason why you came. You are asking the Member of Congress to do something for you. Don't be bashful about asking. They are expecting an "ask".
An "ask" is something specific, such as "We would like you to sign, publicly endorse and take action consistent with the goals of the Peaceable Assembly Campaign." It is not general. "We would like you to support peace and justice the Middle East" is not an "ask". Explain why the Member of Congress should support your "ask".

- 5) After making your "asks" up front, focus on broader concerns.
- 6) Don't make up answers to questions. If you don't know an answer to a question, state that you will research it and get it to the Member of Congress.
- 7) Be disciplined—don't contradict or argue with each other. If you do so, your group will not be taken seriously.
- 8) Be respectful and courteous, yet firm with your demands. Part of the power of non-violence lies in the ability to acknowledge the humanity and potential in any supposed "opponent" without compromising your own principles and objectives.
- 9) Be calm—don't be intimidated. People wielding power can be scary sometimes. Odds are that you know much more about the issue than does the Member of Congress or his/her staff person. Keep this in mind when making your points.
- 10) Listen and take notes. People respond to two-way, genuine communication. Taking notes will also help as you later analyze what works and what doesn't work, what issues this congress member could use major work on, etc...
- 11) Leave and get contact information.

THINGS TO DO AFTER YOUR MEETINGS

- 1) Contact the Peaceable Assembly Campaign at pac@vcnv.org to let us know the results of your meeting. This will help us in knowing how we can best assist you in following up with this Member of Congress and it will help us to publicize your group's action.
- 2) Fax a follow up note to the people with whom you met, outlining your key points, asks and anything they agreed to do. This shows the Member of Congress that you will be continuing to monitor developments.
- 3) Provide any contact information requested.
- 4) Establish an ongoing relationship with your Members of Congress and their staff by phoning, emailing and faxing them when there is pending, relevant legislation.
- 5) Debrief with your meeting participants.



Voices for Creative Nonviolence

Phone: 773-878-3815 pac@vcnv.org
www.peaceableassemblycampaign.org