



10 Tips on How to Get Along with your Legislator

1. BE FAIR

Remember that your legislator represents all of his or her constituents regardless of party or group affiliation. Don't condemn a legislator because he or she has taken a position you personally do not agree with.

2. BE UNDERSTANDING

Try to put yourself in your legislator's place. Try to understand his or her problem, outlook and aims. By having empathy for the legislator, he or she will be more inclined to listen objectively to your position and understand your problem.

3. BE REASONABLE

Recognize that there are legitimate differences of opinion. Never be vindictive! Continue to develop the relationship, even though he or she may not vote your way. A legislator who votes against your position one day may very well be the deciding vote in your favor the next day.

4. BE FRIENDLY

Do not contact your legislator only when you want something done. Invite your legislator to local Board meetings, perhaps as a speaker. Go out of your way to keep in touch throughout the year.

5. BE THOUGHTFUL

Treat your legislator the way you would like to be treated. Let him or her know that you appreciate the good things they do. The golden rule applies in politics, too.

6. BE COOPERATIVE

If a legislator asks for help let him or her know that you can be relied on no matter how busy you are. Your assistance will be appreciated and remembered.

7. BE REALISTIC

Do not expect everything to go your way. Be ready at all times to consider the issues involved and compromise if necessary.

8. BE ACCURATE

Always be sure to have the necessary information and to do a good job at presenting your case. The only way to gain credibility is to know the issues thoroughly.

9. DON'T BE A BOTHER

Legislators do not like to be pestered, scolded, preached to, or "loved to death".

10. BE HONEST

Never stretch the truth to make your argument more saleable. If you learn new facts that would revise your assumptions, do not hesitate to bring the new situation to the attention of the legislator you have been contacting.