



How to Effectively Influence Congress and the State Legislature Without Leaving Home

Prepared by:

Paul Beddoe

NACo Associate Legislative Director

Washington



How to Effectively Influence Congress, and the State Legislature Without Leaving Home

- The most effective lobbying tool is “grassroots” participation.
- This is basically people expressing themselves from their home or office on matters affecting their world. So, how do you do it?
- ***Here we go...***



How to Effectively Influence Congress, and the State Legislature Without Leaving Home

- Preparation
 - Know the Issues
 - Know the Members
 - Know the Key dates for Action
 - Know Votes, Keep Track of them, Let them know you know!
 - How?

How to Effectively Influence Congress, and the State Legislature Without Leaving Home

South Dakota Legislature - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites Media

Address <http://legis.state.sd.us/index.cfm> Go

Google Search Web Search Site 3943 blocked AutoFill Options

United States House
U.S. Senate
U.S. Senate Republic...
White House
THOMAS -- U.S. Con...
Reference Desk
CSPAN
Orbitz Airline Tickets, ...
Aircraft_Airports
Cities_Counties_Maps
Government
Politics
Border Managem...
Dept of Homelan...
Federal Register ...
Fedstats_One St...
GAO Home Page
IRS.gov Home
State and Local G...
Stateside Associa...
Supreme Court of...
US Code
Information
Links
News
Personal
Sports
Done



South Dakota Legislature

Legislative Research Council

James Fry, Director

- [My Legislative Research](#)
- [Current Legislators](#)
- [Current Legislative Session](#)
- [Codified Laws](#)
- [Administrative Rules](#)
- [Interim Information](#)
- [Student Page](#)
- [Session Laws](#)
- [Past Sessions](#)
- [Legislator Historical Listing](#)
- [Related Links](#)
- [General Information](#)
- [Contact Information](#)

[Model Business Corporation Act](#)

[Economic Advisory Group RFP](#)

[America's Legislators Back to School Week](#)

[2005 Intern Information](#)

[2005 Page Application and Information](#)

[Who are my Legislators?](#)



Internet

start Disconnected - ... Inbox - Microso... South Dakota L... Microsoft Powe... 72 3:24 PM

How to Effectively Influence Congress, and the State Legislature Without Leaving Home

NACO - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Address: <http://www.naco.org/>

Google Search Web Search Site 3943 blocked AutoFill Options

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
Counties Care for America

JOIN NACO SITEMAP CONTACT US

Search GO ADVANCED SEARCH

About Counties > About NACO > Conferences & Events > Issues & Interest Areas > County Resource Center > News Room >

County NEWS
» READ

EXPERTISE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

County Resource Center ★★ ★

- Library
 - » Publications
 - » Model Programs
 - » Surveys
- Advocacy
- Awards
- Cost Saving Programs for Counties
- » US Communities Purchasing Alliance
- » Retirement
- » Debt Collection
- » Human Resources
- Education & Professional Development
- Information Technology
- Public Awareness

FEATURES

DHS Outlines NIMS Requirements For FY2005
DHS Secretary Tom Ridge has outlined the minimum FY05 requirements for states and territories to comply with the new National Incident Management System (NIMS). The FY '05 requirements are covered in a letter from the secretary to the nation's governors dated Sept. 8.

Kyle launches new partnerships in support of housing initiative
Newly-elected NACO President Angelo Kyle has wasted no time making headway on his housing initiative.

NACO announces Five Star Restoration Grant recipients
NACO recently announced the recipients of the 2004 Five Star Restoration Challenge Grant Program.

JobsOnline
Welcome to JobsOnline, where you can view the latest job openings from the nation's counties. JobsOnline is a Web-only job service, which supplements the job listings published every two weeks in County News Online.

Grants Available For Counties To Help Develop Jail Diversion Programs
NACO will award grants of \$5,000 to up to four NACO member counties and one state association of counties to

Counties Save With NACO ★★ ★

Members Only Section

- County Membership
- Corporate Membership

Issues & Interest Areas

- Agriculture and Rural Affairs
- Community and Economic Development
- Environment, Energy and Land Use
- Finance and Intergovernmental Affairs
- Health
- Homeland Security
- Housing
- Human Services and Education
- Justice and Public Safety
- Labor and Employment
- Public Lands
- Telecommunications and Technology
- Transportation

Done Internet

start Disconnected - ... Inbox - Microso... NACO - Microso... Microsoft Powe... 7/2 3:20 PM

Washington



How to Effectively Influence Congress, and the State Legislature Without Leaving Home

■ “Influence Pyramid”

■ “Kitchen Cabinet”

- People you trust and know well, that will share your views
- They know people too...

■ Diversity

- people
 - butcher, baker, candlestick maker, lawyer, etc.
- message
 - more than one perspective to address the same concern



How to Effectively Influence Congress, and the State Legislature Without Leaving Home

■ Relationships

- Get to Know Staff and their roles
 - Chief of Staff, Scheduler, Leg. Director.
 - Both in the District and in the D.C. office.
 - Visit Their Office
- Attend Their Public Meetings
- Invite Them to Your Meetings
- Catch 'em at Home!
 - Members do schedule appointments when back in the district



How to Effectively Influence Congress, and the State Legislature Without Leaving Home

- Your Style Matters...
 - Be Brief
 - Don't clutter the message with extraneous information
 - “Quantity, Quality, Diversity”
 - Lots of contacts, direct, succinct, and from different people with different approaches
 - Don't Tirade, Be Civil
 - You may be angry, but it will diminish your effectiveness

How to Effectively Influence Congress, and the State Legislature Without Leaving Home

- Opportunities
 - “Going Postal” -- Problematic post 9-11
 - “Snail Mail” of the U.S Postal Service
 - First Class, Priority Mail
 - Voice
 - Phone Calls During the Workday
 - Voice Mail After Hours
 - Electronic
 - Fax
 - Email
 - Web Forms
 - Internet -- NACo Legislative Action site



How to Effectively Influence Congress, and the State Legislature Without Leaving Home

- “Going Postal” – Not very effective post-911
 - **First Class Mail**
 - Slowest form of communication
 - Letters can take five weeks to get to Capitol Hill due to irradiation and fumigation
 - For lengthy, bulky mailings – don’t do it...
 - Most attachments will not make it through to Members
 - Use Letterhead
 - **Priority Mail**
 - Faster, but more expensive
 - **Other Services**
 - FedEx, UPS Next Day Air



How to Effectively Influence Congress, and the State Legislature Without Leaving Home

■ Voice

■ Calls During the Workday

- Learn the District and D.C. Office Numbers
- Capitol Switchboard
 - 202/224-3121
 - Toll Free 1-888-Leg-NACo (1-888-534-6226)
- Be willing to talk to staff

■ Voice Mail After Hours (... if available)

- Call the direct office line
- Be Brief, Succinct, Don't Ramble



Washington

How to Effectively Influence Congress, and the State Legislature Without Leaving Home

■ Electronic

- Fax
 - Best method since 9-11 to get things to Capitol Hill
 - Keep it simple! Stick to one message
 - Timing is everything -- good for after hours!
 - Use Letterhead
- Email
 - Include your address and ZipCode They only read email from the state/district.
 - Find out staff email addresses
 - The new “GRASSTOPS” Strategy!
 - Any time -- day or night
- Internet
 - Information
 - WebForms -- Senate 66%, House 49%, Governors 55%
 - email services from websites... like [NACo's](#)



How to Effectively Influence Congress, and the State Legislature Without Leaving Home

- Testimony at field hearings
 - Your opportunity to get the message “on the record”
- In-district fact finding meetings
 - “Town Hall” meetings of the Member
 - Arrange for your own tours, etc.
- Statements for the record
 - For any hearings:
 - Can be as effective as limited “live” testimony
 - Another opportunity to influence the outcome at little cost



How to Effectively Influence Congress, and the State Legislature Without Leaving Home

- Using the District/State office
 - Local issues, Local solutions
 - For these matters, this is the place!
 - Many federal agencies have local offices
 - Caseworkers and their role
 - Use the staff to help influence the Hill
 - Well established contacts with district staff can be used as a conduit to the D.C. staff and Member
 - Use the staff to arrange appointments
 - A good relationship with district staff can provide access to the Member and D.C. staff when the opportunity presents itself
 - Use them to get information, reports, etc.
 - Use them to get things like email addresses
 - CRS Reports, GAO Reports, Think Tank information



How to Effectively Influence Congress, and the State Legislature Without Leaving Home

- Things to remember
 - Power and Advocacy:
 - Influencing legislators is a function of “power”.
 - Projecting power enhances advocacy.
 - Legislators respect power.
 - Power is not given, it is built.
 - Building power comes from effective development of the client base.
 - Showing your strength from home adds to the impression of your power.



How to Effectively Influence Congress, and the State Legislature Without Leaving Home

■ Things to remember

- “Where you stand depends on where you sit.”
 - Know your allies
 - Know your enemies
- Who are you dealing with?
 - Know your Member... use the tools
- Make a Self Assessment...
 - Know yourself, what do you do best?
- Assess the political climate...
 - Know the institutional mood that may effect your capacity to make a difference



Washington

How to Effectively Influence Congress, and the State Legislature Without Leaving Home

■ Important Lobbying Axioms

- “Honesty is not the best policy... it is the only policy !!”
- “You don’t make peace by talking to your allies”
- “Remember, today’s opponent may be tomorrow’s ally.”
- “Always be civil, no matter how irritating the opponents may appear to be .”
- “The number one no-no in legislative relations is to circumvent staff and only talk to the Member.”
- “Public opinion affects legislative opinion.”
- “Legislative staff can seem uninformed”
 - but, so can an 800 lb. gorilla -- you don’t want to rile either one !!



How to Effectively Influence Congress, and the State Legislature Without Leaving Home

- Follow Up...
 - Thank them when they help...
- Make the effort
- Don't be Afraid or Intimidated
- Get Others Involved
- Be Creative
- Be Visible
- Be Tenacious



How to Effectively Influence Congress, and the State Legislature Without Leaving Home

You really can make a difference and
effectively influence Congress or the
State Legislature from your home or
office -- it's the new trend in lobbying.

Be a part of it!



Washington

Brought to you by the
National Association of Counties:

Making a difference for counties on
Capitol Hill for over sixty five years...



Washington