

Advocacy 101: Getting Your Elected Officials On Board!

A Presentation / Facilitated Workshop
for Rail~Volution



Topics

- Context – What Influences Elected Officials
- Great Meetings
- Great Site Visits
- Great Written Materials
- Great Campaigns
- Bring it all Together
- The Top 10 Things Elected Officials and Staff HATE to Hear
- The One Little Thing That Makes ALL the Difference



Is Government Broken?

- How much money for transit is in the recently passed federal transportation bill?
- How many bills have been introduced so far this Congress with the word “transportation” in them?
- How many bills are generally introduced in a two year Congressional session?
- How many actually pass?
- How many of those are related to renaming Post Offices and federal buildings?
- Average time for a meeting with an elected official

Factors that Influence Elected Officials



What factors do YOU think influence an elected official?

Potential Factors:

- Friends
- Staff
- Jobs / Development Issues in Their Districts
- The Media
- Money
- The Message
- Their Own Principles
- Good Public Service

MOST IMPORTANT

Their Constituents

Representative
Democracy reflects and
amplifies the **POWER**
of the Grassroots

Great Meetings



- **What** do you want?
- **Who** should you ask?
- **How** should you ask?
- **How** should you follow-up?

Great Site Visits



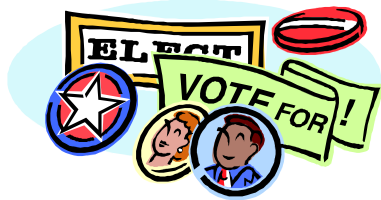
- Decide who to invite
- Sketch out a plan
- Issue invitation
- Logistics
- Recording the event

Great Written Materials

- Succinct (no more than 2 pages)
- Relevant
- Personal
- Thoughtful
- Ask for a response (if appropriate)
- Have a web component



Great Campaigns



- Identify Goal
- Identify Audience
- Identify Supporters / Opponents
- Developing the Plan
- Implementation / Revisions



Your Turn!

The Top Ten List: What Staff & Elected Officials Hate to Hear

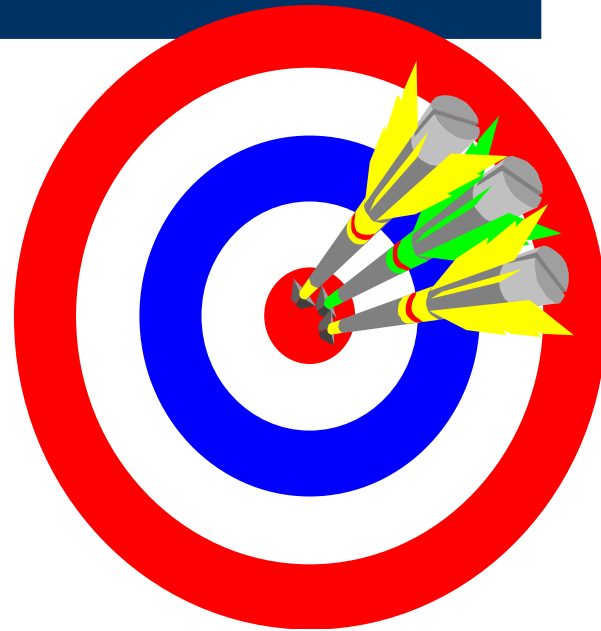
10. But I thought my appointment was with the Senator!
9. Here's some reading material for you – our 300 page annual report
8. How much of a campaign contribution did your boss get to vote against (or for) this bill?
7. I assume you know all about bill number 1234

The Top Ten List, Continued

6. No, I don't have an appointment but I promise I'll only take ½ hour of your time.
5. No, I don't really need anything specific.
4. We have ten (or more) people in our group.
3. What do you mean we have to stand in the hall?
2. What you're telling me can't be right. I heard Jon Stewart of the Daily Show say otherwise.

... And the number one item?

- No, I don't represent anyone from your district. I just thought you'd be interested in what I have to say.



The One Little Thing That Makes ALL the Difference



Yes, there is a “silver bullet” ...

Persistence

Nothing in the world can take the place of Persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and Determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan “Press On”, has solved and will always solve the problems of the human race.

Calvin Coolidge



Or, for the more “Zen” oriented...



Persistence can grind an iron beam down into a needle.

How Can YOU Be More Persistent?

MPTA Online - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Favorite's Tools Help

Search Favorites

www.mptainline.org/laa.html

Michigan Public Transit Association

Action Alerts Association Profile Membership Services News Classifieds Links

Action Alerts!

This is where we post important and time-sensitive calls for action on the part of our membership and the general public.

1. MPTA urges all persons interested in public transportation policy to become familiar with, and support, candidates who indicate support for public transit issues.
2. Our friends at the Michigan Land Use Institute have been busy this summer authoring some most interesting stories on public transportation issues. Click on the topics below to read details:

[Charles Crowell reports on public transportation millage successes](#)

[Carolyn Kelly reports Congressional delay in reauthorizing ISTEA causing problems for public transportation](#)

- Ask Again!
- If you get a negative answer (or more likely no answer) ask a different question
- Work with MPTA and MASSTrans
- Review and respond to Action Alerts
- Stay “United for Transit”!

This is **JUST THE BEGINNING**

In the immortal words of
School House Rock...

“It’s a long, long journey
through the Capitol
City...”



Ideas for an Ongoing Relationship: Come up with your OWN plan

Ask members to...

- Meet in the district
- Visit a transit facility / center
- Write an article
- Demonstrate ongoing support through:
 - Letters
 - Votes
 - Legislation

You should...

- Attend fundraisers
- Give recognition awards
- Thank your lawmakers
- Learn as MUCH as you can
- Train and organize your grassroots
- Keep track of important data about your community



Go Forth and Advocate!

Persistence is Key



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