

Dos and Don'ts of Speaking to Legislators

Know your audience.

Know how your legislator voted on past arts, heritage, and science legislation. Know if they co-sponsored a bill. Be sure to say “thank you” for their support. For the legislators who didn’t vote in favor of arts, heritage, and science legislation in the past, be brave enough to say, “I hope we can count on your support moving forward”.

Stay on message.

Many meetings become ineffective because a participant brings up other issues or strays from the key talking points provided on the one-pager (find below, also available on February 5th at the check-in table/home base).

Get local. Really, really local.

Legislators want to hear your thoughts and opinions because you are a constituent. One of your most useful strategies is to relate your position on the issue to yourself. Tell your personal story—why you care. Facts and figures don’t stick, but personal stories about why arts, heritage, and science are important do.

“This is important to me because...”

After Arts, Heritage, & Science Week

Call, write, or email your legislator to thank them for listening. Reiterate any important points and make sure they remember you. Keep up that relationship—it isn’t easy to start, but through a collective effort, you’ve engaged with them, so use it! Thank them when they make a decision or cast a vote you affirm. Keep in touch. Be amicable and assertive.

Dos and Don'ts

Do:	Don't:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be present and listen.• Ask questions.• Speak honestly and tell your personal story.• Breathe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Go “off-message” or discuss unrelated issues.• Engage in partisan critiques.• Use threats.• Be late.• Get too comfortable.• Forget to follow-up.