

## Springfield

For most legislators what goes on in Springfield during a legislative session is far different than what may happen during the rest of the year. In fact, the General Assembly will be in session only 80-90 days every year. However, those days are intense ones with long hours and a considerable amount of pressure from a variety of sources. They include their party leaders, statewide officials, officials back in the District, personnel from State agencies, lobbyists representing the many organizations with significant public policy interests, legislative staff and the media. All have to be responded to – often at the same time.

### 14 Do's and Don'ts

1. For meetings, be punctual, and don't over-stay your time.
2. Be polite and respectful. Do not get into an argument.
3. Don't criticize any legislator, politician, interest group or lobbyist.
4. If you say you will do something, do it, or provide the reason for not.
5. Provide information as to organizations who support your position and those who don't, but be sure it's accurate.
6. Do not leave the impression that you are unwilling to meet with your opponents to try to find "common ground."
7. If your issue costs money, say so.
8. Follow up with information and an expression of appreciation for the legislator's time.
9. Don't make threats and promise what you can deliver, then do so.
10. Do not be reluctant about talking to a legislator because you think he or she will ask you something you may not know the answer to. Most you will know more about the issue than the legislator does. However, if a question is asked and you are unsure of the answer, find it and provide it.
11. Provide a Fact Sheet and information as to where the legislator can find additional information.
12. If your organization is represented in Springfield by a lobbyist, be sure to mention his/her/their name(s). (Ours are Dick Lockhart, John Carr and Linda Brookhart)
13. Do not complain about the legislative process – try to understand it, difficult as that may be.
14. Before the end of your meeting, be sure to ask the legislator whether he or she will support your position. If "yes," express appreciation; if any other response, tell the legislator you will provide additional information, do so and then follow-up.

Thank you for your involvement in this important activity. ( Prepared by Dick Lockhart)