



LetNYvote.org

Tips for Effective Lobbying

LOBBY YOUR REPS TO LET NY VOTE

Tips for Effective Lobbying | Tips for Scheduling a Meeting | Pre-Meeting Checklist | Post-Meeting Checklist | Let NY Vote Tracking Sheet

- **Remember that lawmakers are human beings.** Begin your meeting with a compliment, if possible. Be friendly, polite, and dress respectfully. The Golden Rule applies to lobbying, too.
- **Be on time.** It's a sign of disrespect that will be remembered when the lawmaker considers your viewpoint. Also, they won't wait around for you. You're also likely to find that the member has left for another appointment.
- **Put in it writing.** Always provide a fact sheet on your issue to lawmakers and their staff. If it's not on paper, it won't be remembered. Plus, staffers need to write memos and floor statements for their bosses. Do the work for them.
- **Do your homework.** Know if the lawmaker has taken a stance on the issue before or if she/he has particular areas of interest or concern.
- **Connect voting rights to your reps concerns.** Find a connection between their other key legislative issues and voting rights, or to their own life story.
- **All politics is local & personal.** Share how the issue will affect the lawmaker's district and local or personal reasons for why they should support our fight.
- **Always tell the truth.** A lobbyist's greatest strength is their credibility—lose that and you're through. If you don't know the answer to a question, tell them you'll try to find out and then follow up promptly.
- **There is strength in numbers and strange bedfellows.** Build coalitions as broad and deep as you can. Mention how many members you have in the rep's district (if it's sizeable) and the number of groups in your coalition.
- **Be a good listener.** It will help endear you to the lawmaker and give you valuable information about the lawmaker's views and concerns. Don't do all the talking; have a conversation.
- **Press for a commitment.** Ask the lawmaker directly if she/he will take the particular stance you support or undertake the task you've requested.
- **Build a relationship.** Try to get to know lawmakers and their staff. Look for common interests, backgrounds, etc. Members and staff are more likely to meet with you again and listen to your views if they know who you are and have a friendly feeling toward you.
- **Say thank you.** Always thank lawmakers for taking time to meet with you and any good stances they take on your issues. Everyone likes positive feedback.
- **Remember the staff.** They're the eyes and ears—and doorkeeper—for your rep.
- **Be strategic.** Focus your efforts on persuadable "swing" votes. Don't waste your time on avowed opponents or known allies (except to say thanks)
- **Don't burn bridges unnecessarily.** Use confrontation as a tool, not a way of life. Lawmakers won't always do what you want, but they might sometimes if you keep a cordial relationship.
- **The squeaky wheel gets the grease.** Don't expect miracles. However, polite persistence pays off. And remember, the power of the ballot box is yours!

Source: Ohio Environmental Council, www.theOEC.org

Tips for Scheduling a Meeting

1. Call the district office and ask to speak with a scheduler. Ask to set up a meeting with your legislator in his/her home district. Make sure to let the scheduler know you are a constituent and be sure to write down their name and email address so you can reference it later.
 2. Try not leave the phone call without having a meeting scheduled, even if the meeting is scheduled for 3-4 weeks away. Have multiple options for dates to meet with your legislator ready. Thursdays and Fridays are typically the best times for representatives to be at their local offices.
 3. If the legislator isn't available, ask to meet with a staffer. The best person to meet with is the Chief of Staff or the Legislative Director.
 4. You may be asked to fill out a form before they will schedule a meeting with you. Fill it out completely and send it back as quickly as you can.
 5. If you're asked what you want to discuss at the meeting, you can say "making our elections work better," "voting reform" or "fair and efficient elections."
 6. For group visits, don't worry if you don't know the names of the people who'll accompany you to the meeting. You can say that you would like a meeting for 3-5 constituents and that you'll provide all of their names before the meeting.
-

Pre-Meeting Checklist

- Do you know what your "ask" is?
 - Did you pack our **1-sheet & early voting sheet** (with your contact information on it) and any backup (i.e., newspaper article, report, photos, etc.)?
 - Are you ready to refute opposition arguments?
 - Are you ready to "Start where they are, not where you are"?
 - Do you have a personal anecdote to share?
 - Do you have a couple of questions you want to ask?
 - Did you bring along a "thank you" or a compliment to share?
 - Is there a field trip or event upcoming to which you can invite the lawmaker?
-

Post-Meeting Checklist

- Did you make the "ask"?
- What did the lawmaker say/promise/question/dispute/request?
- Why does the lawmaker support/oppose/have no position on your "ask"?
- Make a note of:
 - The date, time, and location of the meeting
 - The lawmaker's staff who attended the meeting
 - What teammates who joined you for the meeting
 - What information you shared with the lawmaker
 - What strongly held beliefs, personal experience, trusted sources, etc., that the lawmaker cited to back up their position/actions/votes
 - Mementoes, awards, photos, etc., displayed in the lawmaker's office
- Do you owe the lawmaker any additional information?
- Did you send a follow-up letter, email, or note?
- Did a member of your group report the results of the meeting back to Easy Elections by completing this [short form](#)?**

Let NY Vote Tracking Sheet

(Print this out, take it with you, and fill out at your meeting)

Afterward, please enter this information on our [online form](https://letnyvote.org/report-back) at [LetNYvote.org /report-back](https://letnyvote.org/report-back)

Legislator: _____ District: _____

Who did you meet with? _____

Meeting Date: _____ Meeting Time: _____

Meeting Location: _____

Groups or individuals Participating: _____

Here's a sample of what to say (personalize it):

I believe that elections are the lifeblood of our democracy and it should be easy for New Yorkers to register and vote. It's ridiculous that New York doesn't have Early Voting, Automatic Voter Registration, Electronic Poll Books, voting access for people on parole, and that you have to change your party registration six months before a primary.

The Legislator's Position on:	The legislator has agreed to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Voting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> supports <input type="checkbox"/> opposes <input type="checkbox"/> doesn't know • Automatic Voter Registration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> supports <input type="checkbox"/> opposes <input type="checkbox"/> doesn't know • Electronic Pollbooks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> supports <input type="checkbox"/> opposes <input type="checkbox"/> doesn't know • Flexibility to change your party <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> supports <input type="checkbox"/> opposes <input type="checkbox"/> doesn't know • Restore voting to people on parole <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> supports <input type="checkbox"/> opposes <input type="checkbox"/> doesn't know 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor a bill <input type="checkbox"/> Write a letter to the Speaker <input type="checkbox"/> Write a letter to the editor <input type="checkbox"/> Include position in constituent newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Host a rally <input type="checkbox"/> Host a town hall <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above <input type="checkbox"/> Other <p>_____</p> <p>Notes</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

If you are told that they support/co-sponsor a bill, say:

That's great. But supporting a bill isn't the same thing as passing a law. I want to be sure that [Assemblymember/Senator] is a champion for reform, arguing in conference and doing everything possible to be sure it becomes a law. Will they advocate for Voting Reform on the floor of the [assembly/senate]?

If you're told the problem is the other party in the Senate, ask:

What is [Assemblymember/Senator] doing to overcome that problem. It's past time for NY to catch up with most of the rest of the country and run 21st-century elections.

If they have skeptical questions: [we have answers](https://letnyvote.org)



LetNYvote.org

LET NY VOTE 1-SHEET

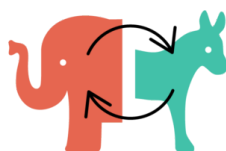
New Yorkers Want Free, Fair And Secure Voting. But unlike many other states, New York's antiquated laws discourage voting and deny citizens the freedom to vote. We're a national leader on many issues but still have some of the worst voting laws in the country. Let NY Vote is pushing for these **5 simple measures New York can enact to protect and expand the freedom to vote for every eligible New Yorker.**



EARLY VOTING 37 states have early voting. NY doesn't. This makes it difficult for working New Yorkers to vote and suppresses voter turnout. NY consistently has one of the lowest voter turnout rates in the country. We were 41st for the 2016 election. Early voting would allow all registered NY voters the opportunity to vote. It also reduces long lines at the polls and saves time and money.



AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION 10 states and D.C. have automatic voter registration. NY doesn't. AVR would increase the reliability and security of voting rolls, reduce human error and chances of fraud, and help voter turnout. Ten states and D.C. have adopted AVR - many along bipartisan lines - to successful results. Oregon experienced a 10% increase in voter participation as a direct result.



FLEXIBILITY TO CHANGE PARTY AFFILIATION 49 States have open primaries or allow change of party close to Election Day. NY has neither. Flexibility is necessary to give voters time to make an informed decision. NY has the most restrictive deadline in the country. To participate in the 2016 primary, voters had to register this change more than 6 months earlier, before candidates had even been solidified, disenfranchising up to 3 million registered NY voters.



ELECTRONIC POLLBOOKS 34 states have instituted electronic pollbooks. NY hasn't. Electronic pollbooks would be a secure system to reduce error in the voting process, improve election-day check-in and cut down on long lines at polling places. It would also allow for quick updating of voter rolls and reduce rush errors, resulting in better managed, more accurate lists, and save time and money.



RESTORE VOTING TO PEOPLE ON PAROLE 16 states and D.C. restore voting rights post-incarceration. NY doesn't. New Yorkers on parole are currently denied the right to vote, despite raising families and paying taxes. Nearly 50,000 eligible citizens on parole, 3/4 of whom are black or Latino, are prevented from casting a ballot. Re-enfranchisement helps both the individual and the community.

In order for our system to work, every eligible citizen should be able to participate. NY State's current system doesn't support this, and it's time to change that.

What is Let NY Vote?

Let NY Vote is a statewide coalition of grassroots groups, legacy organizations, unions, and everyday citizens fighting to modernize New York's elections. Our goal is to pass simple solutions to improve our elections and make registering and voting more accessible for all eligible New Yorkers.



LetNYvote.org

EARLY VOTING

The right to vote is only symbolic without the access to vote. The Let NY Vote coalition is pushing for adequate funding for Early Voting to be included in the NY State Budget so that the no eligible New Yorker has to choose between their job, their family and access to their vote.

37 States Have Early Voting. New York Doesn't

More than two-thirds of the states - 37 states plus the District of Columbia - offer some form of early voting period before an election day. With Early Voting, New Yorkers who can't miss a work shift on election day, and voters who are seniors, disabled, in school, or parents taking care of their families, will get a chance to get to their polling location and cast their ballots when it is convenient for them without giving up their right to vote. **No one should have to choose between work, family, and their vote.**

What Is Early Voting?

Early voting allows voters to visit a satellite location and cast a vote in person without offering an excuse for why they are unable to vote on Election Day.

Satellite locations vary by state, and may include an election official's office, other county and state offices, grocery stores, shopping malls, schools, libraries, and other locations.

New Yorkers Want Early Voting

The convenience of Early Voting is popular with voters across the political spectrum as well as with both Republican and Democratic election administrators. According to a January 2018 Siena poll, 65% of New Yorkers support some form of Early Voting no matter where they live:

- 61% of Upstate
 - 64% Suburbs
 - 69% New York City
-

Why Early Voting Would Work In New York

- **Early Voting would be accessible for all eligible citizens** across all New York counties, whether they live in a rural area, suburban town or crowded city.
- **Early Voting is not a partisan reform idea.** Both Democratic- and Republican-leaning states already have early voting periods, with Texas being the first state to adopt one.
- **Early voting would save the state money** in the long term, **ease pressure on polling sites** and workers, **save time** for voters on Election Day, **reduce registration errors**, and improve voter satisfaction.
- **Early Voting would improve the security of our elections**, allowing administrators time to identify and fix any unexpected problems before election day.
- **Early Voting helps to avoid the confusion and chaos that can result from extreme weather events**, such as Superstorm Sandy or Hurricane Irene, that may occur close to Election Day.