

PREPARING TO LOBBY: KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE



Preparing to Lobby

Regardless of the type of lobbying you choose, preparation is a key component for success.

1. **Figure** out your representatives and windows. Find your elected officials and their office information at pflag.org/leglookup. Congress is usually in session from early January until October or November. Take a look at our State Legislative Profiles spreadsheet at _____ URL_____ for information on state legislative sessions.
2. **Check** your elected officials' voting records, co-sponsorship history, and biographical information at <https://votesmart.org>.

If your elected official already supports our issues:

Thank them for standing up for LGBTQ rights.

Reiterate how important their support is to you as a constituent.

Ask them to cosponsor legislation that they may already be supporting, if they can. By co-sponsoring a bill, our elected leaders go on record to document their support.

Find out how you can help support their efforts to show them that they are not fighting the good fight alone.

If your elected official is in the "conflicted middle":

Emphasize the real impact their support means to real families in their district(s) and state.

Talk about how support for LGBTQ issues will affect your family and loved ones.

Ask what their specific concerns or hesitations may be about a particular bill, and discuss those concerns.

Offer PFLAG and your chapter as a resource for your elected official and their staff.

If your elected official has expressed opposition to our issues:

Remember to have a respectful conversation, keeping lines of communication open. Behave professionally, even if others don't reciprocate. Be mindful of your language; insults and mockery don't persuade.

Emphasize how an unfavorable vote on a particular issue will impact your family.

Challenge assumptions that votes for equal rights—not extra or special rights—won't be popular. Sometimes speaking to the concept of fairness can be very persuasive to a lawmaker on a particular bill even if it is not popular in their district or state.

Offer more information about the issues, and offer PFLAG as a resource.