

Vincent J. Bollon  
Affiliate Leadership Training Summit

Ernest A. "Buddy" Mass  
Human Relations Conference

January 19-22, 2020 | Lake Buena Vista, Florida



ERNEST A. "BUDDY" MASS  
**HUMAN RELATIONS**  
CONFERENCE

# Lobbying: Making or Breaking Policy

Shannon A. Meissner  
Director, IAFF Governmental Affairs

January 21, 2020



# What is Lobbying

## Definition of LOBBY

**lobbied; lobbying**

*intransitive verb*

: to conduct activities aimed at influencing public officials and especially members of a legislative body on legislation

*transitive verb*

- 1: to promote (something, such as a project) or secure the passage of (legislation) by influencing public officials *lobby* a bill through Congress
- 2: to attempt to influence or sway (someone, such as a public official) toward a desired action *lobbying* senators for tax reform



# What is Lobbying?

## Why Lobby?

Virtually every aspect of a fire fighter's job – from equipment and staffing, to bargaining rights and pensions – is shaped by elected officials.

Lobbying is a proven effective way to help meet your goals, or defeat your rivals.



# Step One: Building Relationships

**The best way to achieve lobbying success is to develop productive, long-term relationships with elected officials.  
(and staff!)**

- Legislators want and need knowledgeable people they can trust on selected issues.
  - Honest
  - Accurate
  - Knows real world impact
  - Helpful ally



# Step One: Building Relationships

## Challenges

- Takes **time** and **effort**.
  - Get to know your elected official and their issues.
  - Be visible.
- Accept that **you won't always agree**.
  - Easier said than done!



# Step One: Building Relationships

Don't wait until you have an **Ask**.

- Station visits.
- Ride alongs.
- Grant checks.
- FIREOPS 101.



# Step Two: Gathering Information

- **Clear Goal:** What are you looking to achieve?
- **Questions to ask yourself and be prepared to support:**
  - Why is this important?
  - How can I demonstrate this problem / issue?
- **Gathering information**
  - Data – from your local, the IAFF, City Council, NFPA, other reputable sources
  - Anecdotes



# Step Three: Persuasion

- Face-to-face meeting
- Grassroots and grasstops activists
- Coalition building
- Social media
- Other incentives



# The Face-to-Face Visit

## Before the Meeting

- Know the issue and status.
- Know the legislator's position.
- Be able to articulate arguments in favor and against.



# The Face-to-Face Visit

## During the Meeting

- Start with a brief description of the issue.
- Give arguments in favor.
- Explain impact with personal story.
- Listen and respond.
- Try to get a firm commitment (don't push too hard!).
- Write down any questions or concerns.
- Reiterate commitment or next steps.
- Leave behind written materials.



# The Face-to-Face Visit

## After the Meeting

- Debrief: Did you deliver your message? What feedback did you receive?
- Send a written thank you.
  - Email is acceptable.
  - Include answers to questions or additional information.
- Schedule a follow up meeting if necessary.



# The Face-to-Face Visit

## A Video Example!

[Lobbying: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly](#)



# Grassroots and Grasstops

## Advocates in Your Local to Help You

- Identify potential advocates.
- Assess relationship strength.
- Evaluate willingness to leverage relationship.
- Determine level of interest in issue.
- Determine preferred engagement activities.



# Coalition Building

## Advocates Outside of Your Local to Help You

- Other impacted organizations.
- Concerned citizens.
- Why a coalition?
  - Goals are similar and compatible.
  - Working together will enhance both groups' abilities to reach their goals.
  - Benefits of coalescing will be greater than the costs.

Can be temporary.

Keep in mind the disadvantages of coalitions.



# Social Media

## Social Media to:

- Educate
- Empower
- Persuade

## Download Timmins Presentation:

“Using Social Media to Achieve your Legislative Agenda”



# Incentives

- Be helpful to their priorities.
- Be helpful politically.
  - Attend rallies.
  - Gold and black branding.
  - Attend fundraisers.
- Keep ethics rules and regulations in mind.
- This goes without saying, so I'm going to say it: Don't break the law.



# Tactics

- Be an ally.

Let me help you!

- Be a persuader.

I need you to help me!

- Be a disrupter – USE EXCEEDINGLY SPARINGLY.

Do this or else!



# Keep in Mind

Keep messaging consistent.

- Bad messaging = wrong outcome.

Know the rules of the road.

- The legislative process is an assembly line.
- Where things could get tied up or fall apart.



# Good Lobbying

## Case Study: Repealing the Cadillac tax

Goal: Repeal the Cadillac tax.

Method: Federal legislation.

How would you lobby?



# Bad Lobbying

## Case Study 2: Ward Diesel

Goal: Sell more diesel exhaust systems.

Method: Obtain AFG priority status.

How would you lobby?



# Let's Lobby!

## Scenario: Presumptive PTSD Coverage

The State House is considering legislation to provide PTSD workers' compensation coverage for fire fighters, law enforcement, and paramedics.



# Summary

- Keys to effective lobbying
  - Build relationships
  - Gather information
  - Persuasion
- Clear goals
- Flexible methods

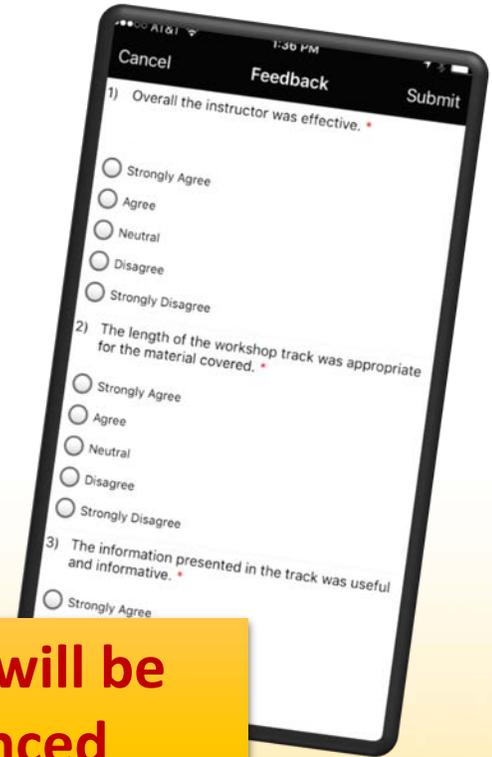


# Questions and Discussion



# Complete and submit your workshop and overall evaluations using the IAFF App.

1. Open the App and click  (by the logo).
2. Select **Sign in** and login (IAFF.org username).
3. Click the **Events** icon and select **ALTS**.
4. Select **Sessions** and the workshop you attended.
5. Click **Session Evaluation**.
6. Complete the evaluation.
7. Click **Submit**.



**Winners will be  
announced  
February 7, 2020.**

For the overall evaluation, follow steps 1, 2 and 3 then click **Dashboard > Event Evaluation**.