

Tips in Attending a Local Forum

- Stay informed about dates & times by reading your advocacy group's emails, watching your local papers or listening to the local radio.
- Check ahead if possible to make sure no changes have been made to the event.
- Take along your advocacy group's talking points. Go over them ahead of time in order to be clear about your thoughts on the issue. If something isn't clear call your advocacy network office to ask about it.
- Clearly identify yourself and the issue you want to address.
- Clearly identify the position that you want the legislator to consider supporting/opposing certain policy or bills.
- Get right to your point and don't monopolize the time. There will be others there who think their issue is just as, or more important, than the issue you want to discuss.
- Don't burn bridges. Hold your tongue if you think you will say something that is out of line. Even though they may not support you on a specific item you will have to work together in the future and they may be your biggest ally in the next issue.
- Be sure to sign in because these lists are often used by legislators to inform constituents about upcoming events or as sign up for newsletters.
- Thank them for their time. (Legislators work all week in Des Moines away from their families and their "real" jobs. Taking this time on weekends is an important part of their service.)

Outcomes:

- You clearly stated your position on policy.
- You asked for their support/opposition on specific items.
- You became a resource or someone they can turn to again in the future with questions or comments.
- You signed up for future communication with your legislator.
- You established or strengthened your relationship with your local legislators.
- You walked away with the knowledge that your opinion matters and that you have done your civic duty by participating in our representative government and impacting public policy decisions.