

# effectively

by letter, or face-to-face. The only one that's a bit difficult for the beginner is timing. There are good times, better times, and best times, and until you've become an expert in your own right, your organization's staff or volunteer leaders should call the shots on timing.

NEVER promise reward for good behavior or threaten retribution for failure to support you. Leave politics at home. Be persuasive rather than argumentative or demanding. Don't knock the opposition; they probably believe in their positions as sincerely as you believe in yours.

When you write, keep your letter to a single page. If you need more space, enclose an attachment elaborating on that one-page summary. Be absolutely sure you spell your legislator's name correctly and get the address right. And, always personalize your letter. Get the facts from your organization but use your own words on your own stationery.

You may get a chance to speak face-to-face with your elected representative. Again, be brief. Be on time, state your case, and leave. Plan to cover your topic in five minutes if possible, ten minutes at the most. Don't linger unless your legislator chooses to prolong the meeting. If you are asked any questions you can't answer, admit it and provide answers later. When you depart, hand your host a written summary (one page) and state exactly what you want him or her to do about it.

When you get back home, or after you have talked with your legislator by phone, or after he or she has voted your way or done something else to help you, send a thank you letter. It's the polite thing to do.

Report back to your organization. Whom did you see or talk with? What did you discuss? What was his or her position?

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*Look for information on a more formal method of lobbying — preparing a brief — in the next issue of Home & Country.*



## A legislative checklist

When you find yourself lobbying for or against a particular piece of legislation, it may be helpful to write down the strengths and weaknesses or limitations of that specific bill. Here's a legislative checklist to follow to help in the assessment of current or proposed law.

1. What is the intent or purpose of the bill?
2. What is the administrative structure for carrying out the bill? What agency will be in charge? Is it new or existing? Can it do the job?
3. What levels of government are involved? How?
4. What standards or requirements must be met? Will licenses be required?
5. What are the procedures for monitoring the program? Who will monitor and how? Will consumers have input?
6. Who is eligible for the program? Who will not be eligible? How many will benefit? How many will not benefit?
7. How does it affect existing programs? Does it change or abolish them? Does it integrate them? Other relationships?
8. How will it be funded? Will it be funded in this bill or another? Will source be federal, provincial or other? Consider charting the flow of funds from the income source to the consumer.
9. What are the costs and benefits? What will the administrative costs be?
10. Evaluate the amendment(s) too. How do they change the bill?