

Georgia Organization of Mothers of Multiples

Ideas for Twin Legislation

How to talk to State Representatives and State Senators

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Have you ever convinced a friend to see a certain movie or your husband to clean the garage? You list the arguments for your position, point out the problems with the other side's arguments, enlist the help of those who are more powerful in the situation and use our own position of power in the situation to get our way. These techniques used in lobbying.

Lobbying is defined as any attempt to influence government decisions. As constituent and not as member of Georgia Organization of Mothers of Multiples, we can talk to our local legislators. For legal reasons, we cannot go as representative of GOMOM.

There are 180 State Representatives and 56 Senators. This is important because it shows you that these people live in your county and are neighbors. They are not hard to get in touch with and are not hard to get to know. Find yours at: www.legis.state.ga.us.

State Representative Charlice Byrd recommended that we each meet with our own legislators or county's legislative delegation and build a relationship with them prior to the session. Representative Byrd also recommended meeting with our local School Boards and School Board Superintendents.

When meeting with a legislator or School Board member:

1. Decide who you want to attend the meeting (other GOMOM members, other local MOMC members, spouse, etc.).
2. Decide where to meet
 - a. Somewhere you are comfortable
 - b. Coffee shop
 - c. Your home
 - d. Restaurant
 - e. Etc.
3. Setup the meeting
 - a. Send a letter requesting the meeting
 - b. Follow up with a phone call
 - c. Remember these are citizens just like you and me.
 - d. When talking to them tell them
 - i. Why you want to meet
 - ii. Who will attend
 - iii. Determine the date, time, location
4. Prepare for the meeting. In advance
 - a. Decide who will speak
 - b. Decide what you want to say
 - c. Decide what questions you want to ask
 - d. Be sure all those you asked to come with you (other club members, spouse, etc.) know what will happen during the meeting
 - e. Decide who will be the facilitator to lead the group
5. Specifically, for GOMOM and Twin Legislation, you might want to make the meeting
 - a. The goal should be to get to know them and to introduce yourself to them
 - b. Introduce yourself as a board member of your local MOMC and GOMOM.
 - c. Tell what the clubs do
 - d. Tell why GOMOM has formed
 - e. As an individual (not as a representative for GOMOM or local MOMC) you understand twin legislation may be coming up for a vote this legislative session. You are in favor or not in favor of this for x, y, z.
6. During the meeting
 - a. The facilitator will lead the meeting
 - b. Have introductions and make your introduction personal

- i. I'm a mom of twins. There are X number of multiple births in Georgia every year.
 - ii. I worked on your campaign. I had your yard sign in my yard.
 - iii. I am in Rotary with you.
 - c. Ask specific questions and listen to the responses. Be a good listener.
 - d. Be ready to defend your position with facts and information.
 - e. Show how a bill will affect his/her district.
 - f. Be prepared to explain the issue or bill. Do not be surprised if they do not know a lot about the bill. There are so many that it is difficult and/or impossible to know all details about every issue.
 - g. Ask what you can do to help the legislator. As Zig Ziglar says, you can have everything you want in life if you just help enough other people get what they want in life.
- 7. Ask for the sale
- 8. Follow up Letter
 - a. Thank them for their time
 - b. Repeat details of meeting and any outcomes or agreements that were made
 - c. Provide any information you promised.

During session:

1. **First rule: no small talk, get to point right away as soon as you hit the chair.**
2. Need to know what other side is because
 - a) State legislator will ask why those who are opposed are
 - b) Need to be able to counter it.
3. How do you know who would agree with you?
 - a) Call, ask if may use their name
 - b) Industry organizations that agree and have their own research
 - c) PTA's
4. If they ask a question you do not know the answer to, admit this and tell them you will research it and get back to them. Always be honest
5. Give the legislator time to express his view. Be a good listener as he talks.
6. **Must close sell →**
 - a) **First step is to ask for it. Can I count on your vote for my position?**
 - b) **Without commitment, you have wasted your time.**
 - c) **Most politicians will not tell you how they will vote.**
7. Let me recommend someone (from opposing side) →
 - a) An arrogant, egotistical know it all
 - b) Can I have them call you?
 - c) This builds up I am here to help you.
8. Do not lose temper because you will need their vote later on down the road. Do not make political issues personal. It is possible to go toe-to-toe and still be friends when it is over.
9. If it is not a principle (ex: never votes for tax increases), generally they will vote for those who helped them.
10. After they agree, continue to be persistent to get vote through,
 - a) Who else is on Committee that is wavering?
 - b) Is there anyone else who needs help that I can talk to for you?
 - c) Ask them who you could go to that opposes it that you could talk to and ask them to go with you.
 - d) Ask how you can help.
 - e) One step always leads to another. Do not let first door shut without opening the second.
11. At end of meeting
 - a) Give publications and supporting documents as gift on way out door with highlighted section for easy reference
 - b) Sincerely thank them for their time.
12. After the meeting
 - a) Follow up all visits with thank you note. Restate your case and provide any information you promised during the meeting.
 - b) It will also be important to have large numbers of other constituents write letters and make phone calls in favor of your position.