

## ADVOCACY = COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

In a democracy, we choose representatives when we elect officials. It is important to let your representatives know how you feel about issues so that they can represent you.

### Methods of Communicating:

1. Personal visit
2. Letter / FAX (if timing critical)
3. Phone Call
4. Email

### TIPS ON BEING AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE IN PERSON

- Introduce yourself and indicate what group (mention number of members) or institution you represent. If you are a constituent, say so.
- Thank him/her – for SOMETHING: for past support of the arts and humanities, for past support of your museum, for past record of support for issues of concern to his/her constituents.
- Ask him/her – for something specific: i.e., favorable consideration on an issue, support for a budget amendment, etc.
- Keep your message brief and to the point. Do not stay longer than 10-15 minutes. You should prepare a one-page fact sheet to leave behind with your main points and any additional information you think you might not have time to convey.
- Use anecdotes and real-life situations if possible – the impact of a VFH or VCA grant on your museum; the effect of your child's participation in a school/museum program; the uniqueness of an organization's cultural programming; the participation of an institution in vital research.
- Acknowledge the difficulty in stretching the state's resources to address all of its needs. Point out that support for museums and the arts should be considered an investment in an economic and educational resource which will provide a positive return.
- Offer to serve as a resource for information, contacts with the museum community, etc. Leave your business card or other contact information.
- Thank him/her for his/her time and consideration. Ask for support for your issue one more time.
- Send a thank you note. Use it as an opportunity to remind the official of your issue, and to request support one more time.