Seven Actions of Highly Effective Advocates

"Democracy is not a Spectator Sport"

1. Stay informed. Read newspapers and magazines, join social media groups and find blogs that help you stay abreast of issues concerning you or your business. Check websites of organizations that produce studies on these issues to supplement the information that you receive from the media. Use your search engine for more in-depth research or new sources for your subject.

2. Discuss the issues. Share the information amongst peer groups and friends. Talk with them and listen to their views about these issues. Start a discussion in your social media groups, your workplace, school, social circle, etc. Sharing opinions and insights will help you shape and refine your own beliefs. Even those people whose opinions oppose yours have valuable points of view.

Discussion is the first step toward finding the truth.

a. Establish a government affairs 'minute' at your organization's meetings to report on current issues or activities.

b. Provide legislative alerts for your group.

c. Establish contact with a local lobbyist on either the municipal or state level for an information source on relevant issues.

d. Conduct special programs within your group (e.g. legislative forums or panels) on 'hot' topics and/or 'how-to' sessions. One idea: organize 'town hall' or 'industry' meetings to educate the group on the ballot issues.

3. Get on record. Write letters (or email) to your local officials on the topics that concern you. Voice your opinion by writing to editors of the printed and e-press you read.

a. Write or send articles written in your industry or about your special interest to local officials or editors.

b. Submit written reports about significant issues discussed within your organization to local officials or editors.

c. Organize letter-writing campaigns to government representatives.

d. Form a coalition of local industry or special interest colleagues to respond to legislative issues. This has proven to be effective, especially at the local level.

4. Vote. Register to vote and keep abreast of local issues affecting you. Many people vote in the presidential election every four years, but issues such as school administration, property taxes and zoning laws are decided in local elections and impact you significantly. Go to Vote.gov

a. Sponsor a voter registration table at a regularly scheduled industry meeting prior to election(s), which could coincide with an educational program on government affairs.

b. Encourage individual political action when legislators are addressing important issues.

c. Get out and Vote! Create a "Get Out The Vote" campaign, assisting people with information on voting, where to vote and when.

5. Volunteer. One of the best contributions you can make to a political campaign is your time. You can answer phones, post yard signs, and disseminate. Contact your local political party office for volunteer opportunities. Go to your search engine and key-in your 'county name' followed by 'party name' and you'll find links to their local office(s).

6. Put your money where your mouth is. If possible, you can contribute financially to a candidate, your state or national party, or special interest cause.

a. Many local parties have special events or dinners with candidate appearances. Levels of participation at these events may vary depending on the level of donation.

7. Believe. Cynicism is for the hopeless. Belief is for the hopeful. Only through speaking out on the issues you support and encouraging other people to do the same can you really make a difference

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