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ADVOCACY. SOLUTIONS.

LEGISLATIVE RESOURCE TOOLKIT

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FLORIDA NURSES ASSOCIATION
Florida Nurses Foundation
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Grassroots Activism: Your Voice Is Being Heard.

As grassroots activism grows in importance, we hear increasingly about how the number of constituent phone calls, letters and emails to the office of a member of the legislature affects important votes on legislation. Voices of constituents calling/emailing legislators and through other venues, such as radio talk shows and blogs, are becoming increasingly influential in the debates on major issues.

*Public officials are attuned more than ever to the views of their constituents - and, in particular, large constituent groups.*

Legislative network activity is a permanent and ongoing vehicle for making nursing’s voice heard on workplace, education, quality and economic issues. Any nurse who is a member of FNA can participate in our grassroots activism. All that is required is enthusiasm and caring about issues that count the most to nurses. FNA strongly urges you to recruit more nurses. The greater nurse numbers are, the more effective FNA will be!

Making Your Voice Heard in Tallahassee

Every day, politicians make decisions affecting nurse employment, work benefits and the wide range of issues of concern to nurses as providers and consumers of healthcare. It is especially important for nurses to be a part of the healthcare policy dialogue in order to maintain and enhance nurses’ pivotal role in the delivery of healthcare.

Are your legislators paying attention to your interests? Legislators care about how their constituents feel about issues. At the same time, they are trying to be experts on numerous issues, and they are hearing the opinions of many other groups who may not share your opinions and viewpoints on an issue. When your legislator goes to vote on proposed legislation, he or she wants to know how many folks back home called or wrote for and against an issue.

In addition to actions in the legislature, many decisions in Tallahassee are made by policy decisions of the Executive Branch. It may be helpful to call a particular Executive Branch Official Cabinet Member or the Governor to register your opinion as well.

By taking just a few minutes to pick up the phone and make one or two short calls and write a few short emails, you will be playing a critical role in making nurses heard in the policy making process. As your call/email and the calls/emails of other nurses are registered in the policymaker’s office, the FNA position will be heard loud and clear.

At the same time that you are taking action, other segments of FNA’s public policy team (such as media spokespersons, lobbyists, and policy analysts) will be representing nurses’ interest in other ways - but they provide only the words while you provide the emphasis!
How An Idea Becomes A Law

This simplified chart shows the route a bill takes through the Florida Legislature. Bills may originate in either House. This bill originated in the House of Representatives.
Ten Commandments for Successful Living
With Your Legislator:

1. THOU SHALT NOT LIE to thy legislator.
   (Thy sins will find thee out and thou shalt nevermore be believed by them.)

2. THOU SHALT NOT FORGET TO THANK thy legislator for their help.
   (Ingratitude turneth away a legislator as surely as a soft word turneth away wrath.)

3. THOU SHALT NOT IGNORE they legislator between sessions.
   (Seekest thou them only in thy hour of need and thou may find them deaf to thy pleas.)

4. THOU SHALT NOT BE HYPER-CRITICAL of they legislator voting on any bill.
   (Alienate them not as thou shalt surely need them on another occasion.)

5. THOU SHALT NOT HESITATE TO PRAISE thy legislator publicly for their good works.
   (They runneth for office and all kind words are as manna from Heaven.)

6. THOU SHALL NOT INSIST thy legislator desert their party policy.
   (Verily, an excommunicated legislator serveth no one well.)

7. THOU SHALT NOT FAIL TO RECOGNIZE the importance of thy legislator’s office.
   (One who maketh another feel important maketh a lasting friend.)

8. THOU SHALT NOT FORGET thy legislator too hath problems and sometimes needeth help.
   (Bread cast upon the waters returneth hundredfold.)

9. THOU SHALT NOT BECOME COMPLETELY PARTISAN.
   (Thou must be prepared to live with either party, and sometimes thou must liveth both at once.)

10. THOU SHALT NOT NIT PICK.
    (Heckle not thy legislator with insignificant matters and they will heareth better thy counsel on important ones.)

Members of Congress come to town to do something, and those who urge them to simply oppose measures coming before the congress aren’t helping members win re-election—which is a primary focus for Members and their staff.

Politicians have egos—SURPRISE! They like to be thanked, and especially liked to be thanked in ways that deliver positive news reports to their constituents during campaign cycles.

Victory inside the beltway usually means passing a bill or enacting a regulation—whether the bill or regulation really works is largely immaterial. In fact, the best victories for Congress are short-term, allowing another follow-up victory times to coincide with another election year.

Win/Win strategies and consensus are great precepts for those in the private sector. But when it comes to Members of Congress and the White House, victory in November in even-numbered years comes only when your opponent loses—so win/win opportunities are of markedly less interest as elections approach.

Politicians raise money to buy ads and otherwise reach voters. Individual membership groups can short-circuit the money-raising process if they can deliver valued channels of communications to enough voters in key districts.

Unusual alliances produce unusually rapid public policy results.
Strategic Action for Contacting Legislators:
Lawmakers want to hear from their constituents.

Lawmakers also need to hear from others outside of their districts to gauge the widespread concern of an issue. Respectfully remind them that even though you do not live in their district, their actions on issues that affect you make you their constituent.

Elected officials do not like to deal with “hot” (read: “controversial”) issues. If they see a grassroots swell of opposition to a controversial bill, they will try to avoid addressing that issue with a public vote.

Here’s the order in which you need to consider contacting legislatures on our issues:

CONTACT ELECTED OFFICIALS FROM YOUR DISTRICT
Your voter registration card will show your districts for county, state and federal offices. For state bills, your local state representative and senator need to be contacted early and often.

CONTACT COMMITTEE MEMBERS
As a bill moves through the process, it is heard by different House and Senate Committees. Call your state’s bill tracking service, the sponsor’s office or the committee offices to get current information on is next step in the process and hearing dates and times.

CONTACT NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS
Since nursing and healthcare issues have been around for the past few years, nurses have worked hard to educate, make friends and gain support, incumbent members who are sympathetic to our issues will continue to work with us. These members that are our enemies won’t likely change their minds. It is those newly elected members that need to hear our side more than any other. You can find this list by calling your state’s clerk’s office.

GOVERNOR, PRESIDENT AND SPEAKER
These three positions are the most powerful in the state. Because the Senate President and House Speaker are not only the leaders of their chambers, they are also the lead person of their party. They have the power to direct issues that they want promoted or killed. The Governor is the one to either sign or veto a bill which has passed both chambers. The Governor is sensitive to the people as well, though his decision is not quite as dependent on public sentiment as individual legislators. These leaders do not want to deal with highly controversial issues either. Don’t leave these three positions out when you write or call. They are key to the process and can make or break the passage of a bill with a phone call.
Most Effective Methods of Contact: 
In Descending Order

Face-to-Face Individual Visit

Poll of the District

Face-to-Face Group Visit

Telephone Call

Handwritten Letters

Emails

Resolution Passed by an Organization

Petition

News Report of Group/
Individual Position

Form Letter
Face-to-Face Individual Visits With Your Legislator:

Guidelines for Personal Visits

✓ Plan Ahead: Call the member's office to make an appointment. Expect to
wait anywhere from a few days up to two weeks to see the member in person.

✓ Call for Appointment: When calling for the appointment, tell the secretary
the purpose of the visit - including the title and the number of the bill if you
know it - and the amount of time you think you'll need. Remember, the more
time you need, the longer you'll be waiting to get the appointment.

✓ Time Sensitivity: If the purpose of your visit is time sensitive - like the bill is
scheduled for a vote within days - explain the urgency, politely, to the
secretary. If the personal visit cannot be scheduled in time, leave a telephone
message or send an e-mail.

✓ Don't Be Rude or Threatening, EVER: Just like letters and phone
messages, being rude or threatening in requesting, even demanding, a
meeting is a sure fire way to be ignored.

✓ Arrive On Time: Arrive for your appointment on time, but be patient if the
member is not on time, even if the meeting needs to be rescheduled. Try to
remember the demands placed on members during session working through
hundreds of bills!

✓ Prepare Your Presentation: Prepare your presentation to be brief, concise,
and accurate. Don't tell the member every detail you may know about the
issue, keep it basic. Offer more information if they are interested, but don't
insist that they know all there is to know.

✓ Show Interest: Show that you are interested in the member's perspective,
that you respect the member's right to disagree if they do. Offer information to
counter their opposing views, without becoming argumentative.

✓ Ask for Assistance or Support: Just like you would in a letter, ask for
specific assistance or support for your position. If you leave with their
commitment, great! If you leave without a commitment, try to find out what
additional information they need to make a decision.

✓ Thank the Member: Thank the members for their time when you leave their
offices, and follow-up with a Thank You note. If you received a commitment,
thank them for that as well.

✓ Follow Up: After the member acts or votes, send a note to - hopefully - thank
them for their favorable action. If the member did not act or vote as you had
hoped, send a note reminding the member of your interest and seek to keep
the lines of communication open for the future.
Your goal when calling a legislator is to provide the key pieces of information he or she needs: your name, your city and county (it helps to leave your full address, but it is very important to let the office know that you are a constituent), your occupation as a nurse, the reason for your call stated in a few words and your position on the issue.

Staff assistants answer most calls to a legislator’s office. Since others will be trying to reach your legislator as well, you may not get through the first time you try - call back or try a different time of day if the line is busy.

When your call is answered, ask to speak with the person who handles health care legislation for the legislator. If that person is not available, leave your message with whoever can speak with you.

**Tips For Telephoning Your Legislators:**

- Call at a reasonable hour.
- The legislator’s secretary will normally answer the telephone. If the legislator is not available, leave your message with the secretary or on voice mail.
- Know the bill number and title you are calling about. The legislature considers over 1000 bills each year and it is necessary to refer to the bill by its number when calling.
- Organize the points you want to cover before you call and be brief. Legislators are very busy and can’t afford to spend long periods of time on the telephone.
- If you can’t find the direct number of your legislator, call the state capitol’s switchboard. Give the switchboard operator the name of the legislator you want to speak with and you will be connected.

**TELEPHONING YOUR U.S. SENATOR/REPRESENTATIVE**

Senators and Congress Members have offices in Washington, D.C. and in their home states. You may call and leave a message for them at either office.

Before calling, organize your thoughts into a brief message. You will be talking with a staff person in that office and they will be writing down your message for the Senator or Representative. If you are calling about a specific bill or issue, be very clear what that is. Have the number of the bill ready if calling about a bill.
Sample Call to Legislator:

Hello, this is (INSERT YOUR NAME HERE) and I am a registered nurse in (INSERT YOUR CITY NAME HERE). May I please speak with the person who handles healthcare issues?

I am calling because I want to let Senator (INSERT SENATOR NAME HERE) know that I am very concerned about (INSERT ISSUE HERE—Describe the issue, detailing how the Bill will affect your role in healthcare).

It is critical that the Senator SUPPORT or OPPOSE the issue, (INSERT NAME OR BILL DESCRIPTION HERE) because (INSERT REASON HERE—Give one to three very brief reasons, such as “We can all save money without sacrificing the quality of healthcare if the provision passes” or “We as nurses are already trained to provide this service.”)

Many of my nursing colleagues share my concern regarding this.

Provide your name, address, phone number and/or email address so that the Senator can respond to you. Please make sure that the Senator knows that I (support/oppose bill or issue name). Thank you for your time.

(Substitute Representative for Senator when calling your member of the House.)
Tips For Writing Your Legislators:

Legislators take note of all letters from their constituents, but many say they devote the most attention to letters that are original (not mass produced) and thoughtful.

It is important to clearly identify your subject matter and viewpoint, perhaps by making a key statement in a single paragraph or using bold or underline for emphasis. Letters provide the opportunity to say more than you might be able to say during a brief telephone call, but you do not want your message to become lost because you are raising many topics in the letter.

Therefore, please create your own letter using the ideas suggested to you. Letters and other correspondences that have been “localized” carry much greater weight with legislators than a standard form letter.

Sample Letter to a Legislator:

Robin Jones, RN
321 Broadway Lane
Orlando, FL 32828

January 1, 200_

The Honorable Elaine Adams
Address

Dear Representative Adams:

As a Registered Nurse and parent living in your district, I see every day how important the children’s health provision in the Health Care Reorganization Act, HB 1234, would be in making sure that children receive preventive healthcare.

Nurses and other healthcare providers spend great amounts of time caring for sick children who might not be sick if they had preventive healthcare. Children are brought to the emergency rooms at the last minute because they did not receive regular, or preventive care. These emergency room visits cost society an inordinate amount of money. This money could be spent on other important things if children have adequate preventive healthcare!

I urge you to support the children’s health provision in HB 1234.

Thank you for your help with this important legislation. Florida’s nurses are working hard to support responsible healthcare policies.

Sincerely,
YOUR NAME
Emailing Your Legislators:

E-mail has changed the way that we communicate and in many ways has replaced other forms of communication, such as phone calls or handwritten letters. This technological tool is fast, cheap, and efficient. However, because it is a fast and relatively informal means of communication, many legislators view it as less credible than other methods. If you use e-mail to communicate with your legislator, you should do so in the context of an ongoing relationship in which you use other methods as the foundation of your communication. To construct an e-mail with impact, follow these steps:

1. In the subject line, state that you are a constituent (for example – Subject: Message from a constituent on xyz issue). Most legislators have their staff sort and respond to their e-mail, and this strategy will increase the likelihood that your message is read.

2. State your request concisely. View your message as different from an electronic letter. Again, e-mail is less formal and much briefer than traditional written communication. Construct your message accordingly — keep it tight and short.

3. Provide personal examples and local context. Use similar principles as those in letter writing, but in a tighter format. If you are sending a generic e-mail written by a group of which you are a part, insert personal examples in the message.

4. Persuade a like-minded friend, family member, or colleague to send an e-mail as well. Quantity is critical. Legislators pay attention to issues when they believe that many of their constituents care about an issue. One e-mail is not convincing.

5. Report your e-mail. If the e-mail is initiated by an organization, ask if they want you to report your email. Some groups can monitor responses electronically without your having to report, but most want you to let them know. If you persuaded a friend, let them know that your friend will be reporting as well. Make sure that your friend follows through.

6. Follow up. Again, because the impact of e-mail varies widely from legislator to legislator, be sure that you are using other methods to communicate with your legislator. Follow your e-mail with a phone call, handwritten letter or visit.

7. Communicate more than once. As with all other forms of communicating with your legislator, view your e-mail as part of an ongoing relationship. Keep in touch and tune in to your legislator and his or her position on the issue.

Contacting the Governor and Executive Branch Officials:

The information provided about contacting a legislator by telephone or letter is applicable to contacting the governor’s office or an Executive Branch official as well. We all are “constituents” of the Executive Branch. Your message may be about a policy or proposed rule rather than about a vote on proposed legislation, but the process is the same. Identify who you are, your occupation, the subject matter you are calling or writing about and your opinion in a brief and persuasive manner.
Media Relations:

Every one of us gets a lot of our information from the media - newspapers, magazines, television, radio or the Internet. What the general public knows about something is usually based on what people get from the media.

The media influence the political process very directly. How people react to politicians - and how politicians vote on issues - is directly related to what appears in that media.

The primary goal is to enable nurses to take an activist role on issues that affect our profession. Media involvement will help us accomplish that goal by:

- Making sure that our messages are heard by people who influence jobs, pay and policy.
- Enhancing the image of nurses as the single largest profession within the health care delivery system.
- Helping the public become better informed about the critical roles that nurses play in health care delivery, especially in preventive and primary care.

You are not expected to become a media expert. But with a basic understanding of how the media works and how you can work with the media, you can significantly influence public opinion in your community.

The media is inherently interested in healthcare delivery. They want to know not just what legislation is being passed, but what the new legislation means to people in your local area. Healthcare quality, cost, access and delivery will continue to be a topic of interest for the foreseeable future.

As a nurse, you are an expert in the eyes of your local media in understanding how the healthcare delivery system works and what can be done to make it function better for patients.

What You Can Do...

Read and view the media

Make a list of all the media in your area that, in your view, are influential. This will include newspapers, television stations and radio stations. Monitor the list of media. This means reading the stories that involve health issues affecting nursing, especially the role of nursing, and watching and listening to radio and television news and talk shows when health care topics arise.

Call into Radio and TV Talk Shows

Talk shows are becoming more and more important in influencing the political debate. National talk shows like Rush Limbaugh and Larry King are certainly important, but so are local talk shows in your area. These shows frequently address important national and local issues such as health access and financing healthcare. Policymakers are greatly influenced by the debate emanating from these shows. We strongly encourage you to:

- Be aware of the radio and TV talk shows in your area that deal with health or political issues.
- Listen to these shows when you can.
- Call the talk show when an issue of interest to nursing is being discussed. Identify yourself as a nurse and espouse nursing’s view. We will send you talking points for these shows when important issues arise.
Write letters to the editor

Every newspaper has a “letters to the editor” section on the editorial page. This page provides an opportunity to express your point of view on stories that appear in the newspaper or on issues of the day.

The editors of the newspaper will be especially interested in your reaction to their editorials.

FNA encourages you to write letters to the editor. Such letters should be short (no more than 350 words) and should state, in the first sentence, what the letter is responding to.

For example, you may say, “In your editorial December 15, 2003 on ‘Healthcare Access,’ you said...” or “in your news article, ‘Governor Bush pushes Health Care Reform (Page A7, December 14, 2003),’ “Governor Bush said...” You would then go on to react to the statement and express nursing’s point of view.

We also encourage you to urge your colleagues to write letters to the editor. The more they appear, the better for our efforts in educating the public about nursing’s agenda for health care reform and the pivotal role of nurses in the health care delivery system.

One final point: local newspapers, even big ones, like the local angle. If you can use local examples of how a particular policy will affect patients in your community, it will increase the chances of your story being published.

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MARCH 2010

Mark your calendars now for FNA LOBBY DAYS on March 16 & 17. You’ll learn about FNA legislative priorities, meet and mingle with legislators, network with nurses and much more!

**TO DO:**

- Register for FNA Lobby Days
- Make hotel reservations at the Marriott Residence Inn in Tallahassee
- Spread the word about what a great opportunity Lobby Days is.

**SAVE THE DATE:**

FNA Lobby Days

**MORE INFO:**

florianurse.org | conferences@florianurse.org | 407.896.3261
ADVOCACY TIPS
Suggestions for Meeting with Legislators

1. Be flexible in the times you are available to see the legislator, scheduling as far ahead as possible. Be prepared to suggest or accept alternative appointments including meetings with a key staffer.

2. Be on time – and be prepared for a legislator who has many time commitments during the session.

3. Be prepared – know who you are talking to. Learn something about each legislator before you meet him or her.

4. Understand the legislative process – how a bill becomes a law. See the enclosed flow sheet on the bill process.

5. Never underestimate the power of a legislative aide. Due to their contacts with constituents, the aides can advise a legislator on constituency interest on a project or bill and, therefore, can advocate your position if you meet with them. Enlist their help. Always be courteous to them.

6. Prepare your case and be clear about what you want to result from the meeting. Know your special category project and be specific about the project’s benefits to your community.

7. Be brief and to the point.

8. Never lie, never lie, never lie. If you don’t know the answer, there is no shame in admitting it. Promise to get back with the information and then be sure to follow through.

9. If with a group, appoint a single, articulate, and organized spokesperson. Be sure to introduce all members of the group and their interest in the project.

10. Be courteous and friendly. Never embarrass or threaten a legislator.

11. Acknowledge the existence and arguments of opposing sides of a controversial issue. Be prepared with facts of your own that refute your opponents’ arguments.

12. Before leaving, try to summarize the major points of your discussion and ask for their support on your issues. Try to frame your request in a maximum of 3 critical issues.

13. Thank the lawmaker for his or her time and concern. Leave your business card or some memento of your special category project.

14. When you return home, send a thank you note to all legislators and aides with whom you met to remind them of your project and interests.
22 TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE LOBBYING

1. Have specific lobbying objectives. Concentrate on principles rather than details. Present individual positions as separate entities. If you link them, several groups, each opposing one component but unable to engineer a defeat singly, can join forces to defeat the entire package.

2. Do your homework. Keep plugging. Chances are your opponents won't. Know what you are likely to be asked and exactly how you will respond. Anticipate problems or obstacles and try to overcome them in advance. Have sound facts at hand and rehearse your responses to questions through role-playing exercises.

3. Know the facts your opponents will use. Always try to use your own facts but be prepared with facts that refute those of your opponents. If you can present your information in a brochure or other format fitting a #10 envelope that legislators can carry in coat pockets or handbags, your facts can become references in floor debate.

4. Be concise and to the point. Presenting a legislator with the minimum information needed will be more effective - and more appreciated - than trying to convey too much.

5. Be accessible. Legislators need and appreciate your help. You can become a resource on whom they can depend for reliable information. Be honest with them, and never be condescending. Decline to answer when you must, but never lie.

6. Never offer opinions on issues outside your direct concern. Your personal views may harm your institutional image, and your primary responsibility is to your institution. Also, always say "I don't know," when you don't, but then find out.

7. Plan your lobbying "point of entry" carefully. Learn useful facts about individual legislators (special interests influence among colleagues) as well as their committee assignments and other official roles. Identify potential friends, foes and coalitions.

8. Encourage legislators to lobby for you. A legislator may be able to influence colleagues whom you cannot influence directly.

9. Minimize spokespersons. Involve as few persons as possible in direct lobbying and assign well defined and limited roles to each. When you need more people to monitor legislative developments, they should contribute eyes and ears, not mouths.

10. Maintain close communications with other lobbyists. Report every legislative contact with one another. Establish a message center, and keep it constantly staffed.

11. Keep your big guns in reserve. Don't let your top officers be a front-line lobbyist. Maintain the option of bringing him or her into the action for special needs, to present a necessary shift in position, for example, or as reinforcement.

12. Respect pet projects. Don't oppose the favorite projects of your friends if you can possibly avoid it.

13. Practice the art of compromise. Sometimes you must "rise above principle." You may have to accept some negative aspects of an action to achieve your overarching objective.

14. Don't precommit. Although you may have to give up something in the face of political realities, don't concede until you're certain your original position is hopeless.

15. Don't beat a dead horse. Once your position is lost, give it up gracefully. Don't waste credibility and influence that could better be used on other issues that are still alive. Remember that power and influence are finite and expendable.

16. Learn the legislative process. Knowing all the ins and outs of committee procedures, staff activities, and so on can sometimes make the difference.

17. Have a bill reader. Someone from your institution or organization should review every bill introduced to be sure there are no negative consequences or effects, possibly unanticipated by the author, if it is passed.

18. Maintain open communications with the capital press corps. Recognize the job they do and try to be honest and helpful. You will be rewarded by shared information.

19. Be negative when you must. While it's usually preferable to be for something, it is frequently necessary to oppose a proposal. You'll find that it is often easier to stop a bad bill than to help pass a good one.

20. Don't forget the executive. Lobbying includes maintaining effective relationships with the governor's office and executive agencies as well as the legislative branch.

21. Avoid skunks. Remember the old saying, "Never get in a fight with a skunk. No matter who wins, you'll still come out smelling bad."

22. Have someone proofread your hand-outs. Typos are not good for public relations.

* T. Michael Elliott, Director, Adjunct Department of Higher Education and Louisiana Guided Elliott, Junior Associates, M/A/and Associates
10 Things To Remember When Lobbying:

**LOBBY**: To try and influence (an official) to take a desired action.

1) **Keep Well Informed.**
   - Read the local newspaper.
   - Pay attention to local TV news reports.
   - Do research—Understand the process.
   - Talk to your friends and neighbors.
   - Know opposition's position.

2) **Take Charge.**
   - Take responsibility for getting information to and from legislative staff.
   - If part of an organization, put someone in charge.
   - Analyze proposed solutions and determine how it will meet your needs.

3) **Get Personally Acquainted.**
   - Make it your business to become personally acquainted with your representative.
   - Get to know the key staff.
   - Meet with your legislator regularly.

4) **Be Prepared To Act Quickly.**
   - Remember the old saying… “It ain’t over ‘til it’s over!”
   - Be able to respond in short notice.
   - Have important numbers and key contacts handy.

5) **Contact Your Legislator.**
   - Write letters and emails—Be logical, state your position and ask for support.
   - Make phone calls—Be polite and get to the point.
   - Make appointments—This is the best way to communicate your point of view.

6) **Identify and Respond to Legislators’ Concerns.**
   - Identify political forces at work.
   - Know who else has contacted the legislator.
   - Anticipate and be prepared to respond to any concerns.

7) **Tell Official Specifically What You Want.**
   - If they don’t know, they can’t help.
   - Think through the problem. Know what action will meet your needs.

8) **Never Provide False Information.**
   - Credibility. Trust. Integrity.

9) **If You Don’t Know, Say So!**
   - Don’t feel as if you have to know everything.
   - Don’t create an answer.
   - Let your legislator know you will research information and respond.
   - Determine the timeframe.

10) **Courtesy is the Best Policy.**
    - Always say thank you.
    - Treat officials as you wish to be treated.
    - Stick to it!
Things to Remember When Lobbying in Tallahassee:

While in Tallahassee:
- Smile at everyone you see at or near the Capitol. That person may be the legislator or aide you’ll need to talk to later. Say hello too, if appropriate.
- Be careful what you say anywhere in Tallahassee, e.g. restaurants, shops, etc.
- It’s good to wear a small pin or button appropriate to the issue you are lobbying.
- Neatness counts. Try to dress as if you were going to a job interview or important appointment.

Geography of the Capitol:
- Refer to the maps you have.
- Walkways from the House to the Capitol to the Senate and back are only on the 2nd and 3rd floors.
- Register as a lobbyist at the Information Desk on the 4th floor. If you register, be prepared to pay a $60 house fee. It is not necessary for one day.
- The Information Desk, at which you can pick up daily House and Senate Journals and Calendars, is in the Rotunda area on the 4th floor of the Capitol.
- You can pick up bill copies (by number) in room 513 Capitol for the House and room 303 for the Senate.
- There is a public cafeteria on the Lower Level of the Capitol and a café on the 10th floor.
- The House Office Building is to the right of the Capitol, if you are facing it from the old Capitol side, and the Senate Office Building is on the left.
- Decide which legislators you wish to see and on which bills.
- If you wish to watch a Committee meeting, go to the room designated at the time on the Calendar.
- If you wish to visit a legislator, go to the office listed in your directory (the buddy system is fine).

Introduce Yourself
- Ask for an appointment with the legislator first. If he/she is unavailable, ask for an aide.
- Mention where you are from, if visiting a home legislator.
- Mention whom you are with.
- Let the legislator (or aide) know the bill you are supporting or opposing and describe it briefly.
- Ask how the legislator stands (unless you are positive you are already know his or her stand).
- Let the legislator (or aide) talk, don’t interrupt. You are there to discuss the legislator’s stand.
- Listen and try to find out what the legislator thinks.
- If the legislator supports your position, ask for advice. If not, discuss briefly your own reasons for supporting or opposing the bill. Speak from the heart and give examples.

Avoid Arguing
- Don’t be afraid to admit you know something. Don’t give information or quote statistics you’re not sure of. Offer to find them information and get back it back to the legislator.
- Leave the legislator with a friendly feeling and the way open for another meeting.
- Thank the legislator (or aide) for his or her time. Follow up on any information promised.
- If you see or visit known friends, thank them for their support.

Don’t
- Wing it when you aren’t sure of the facts; It’s too easy to lose credibility.
- Hold a grudge; Your adversary today may be an ally tomorrow. Personalizing it is dangerous.
- Confuse little issues with major ones.
- Make the elected official or staff look bad.
- Bad mouth other elected officials.
How Florida Nurses Association members connect to their elected leaders.

Connect to CapWiz via the Florida Nurses Association website at:
www.floridanurse.org

• Link to FNA – Legislative Information
Please visit the Florida Nurses Association website and click on Legislative Activities then double click on the U.S. Capitol Icon and you will enter Capitol Wiz. Click on Legislative Issues then click on Legislative Alerts and Updates which will bring you to FNA legislative reports, bills we are supporting or opposing, alerts/updates on bills, talking points and Senate/ House committees during legislative session.

• From the FNA Capitol Wiz homepage, you can:

Visit the Florida State Legislature Page

For a link to this page please go to the website and click on Legislative Activities, then double click on the Capitol Icon and you will enter Capitol Wiz, click on Follow this link to visit the Florida State Legislature Page.

For Members of the Florida Senate and Committees:
► Click on flesenate.gov; for members click on Senators, then on the drop down menu click on the members page. For all Senate Committees click left on committees, then across to committee pages.

For A Copy of the Senate Directory:
► Click on flesenate.gov; under Publications tab click on 2006-2008 Directory.

For Member of the Florida House of Representatives and Committees:
► Click on myfloridahouse.gov; for members click on Representatives tab on top of the page. For all House Committees click on Council and Committees tab on top of the page.

For A Copy of the House Directory:
► Click on myfloridahouse.gov; and click Documents tab on top of the page. Scroll down to Printed Directories and click on the House Directory.

The FNA Cap Wiz homepage is your map to finding information about the current activities of the FNA Legislative Program. Check this page often during the legislative session to see valuable Highlights and Action Alerts!

• From the FNA Capitol Wiz homepage, you can:

After looking up the elected House and Senate officials in your area you can get a short biography, contact information and even e-mail them right from the website! ► From FNA website click on Legislative Activities double click on the U.S. Capitol Icon and you will enter Capitol Wiz. Enter your street address, city, and zip code then click Go to find your State Representatives and your State Senator.

Take a minute and...
Explore CapWiz today!
STATE HOUSE AND SENATE MEMBERS
With Key Committees

Things you need to know:

SESSION BEGINS/ENDS: ________________________________

THE BILLS: (things to watch this year)
STATE BILL TRACKING SERVICE PHONE NUMBER: ______________________

BILL NUMBERS TO WATCH:

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

CONTACTING LEGISLATORS:

My district State Senator is: ________________________________
Capital Office Telephone: ______________ Local Office: ______________

My district State Representative is: ________________________________
Capital Office Telephone: ______________ Local Office: ______________

COMMITTEES:

Committees my Senator is on: ________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Committees my Representative is on: ________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Important Phone Numbers:
State Legislature Help Desk: ________________________________

Clerk’s Office: ________________________________

Speaker of the House: ______________ Office Phone: ______________

Senate President: ______________ Office Phone: ______________

Secretary of the Senate: ______________ Office Phone: ______________

Governor’s Office: ______________ Office Phone: ______________
LEGISLATIVE ACTIVISM: NOT AS DIFFICULT AS YOU MIGHT THINK
By Bonnie C. Sklaren, RN, MSN, ARNP

Becoming active by volunteering in the political arena is not as difficult as many think, nor does it necessarily mean making a huge commitment of time, a precious commodity for all of us.

I have heard all too many times, “I am not interested in politics, you do it” or “They (the politicians) are all crooks so why bother?” or “I don’t know what to do or if what I do will matter.” The issue is not whether or not we are interested in politics, but as nurses the issues are if we care about how we are able to practice or whether or not there is sufficient funding for schools and universities to educate future nurses. What about access to care? How many times do we care for people who are sick and possibly in the hospital because they could not afford the medicine or care that would have helped them be a healthy productive individual? How about the issue of affordable housing that would make it possible for nurses and hospital support staff to live near their place of employment? Many of the decisions regarding these crucial issues are made by our Legislators and if we are not at the table to have input who will be?

I know from experience and talking to many nurses that most do feel passionate about issues regarding healthcare delivery but feel either their contributions in the legislative arena would be so small as not to matter or they feel intimidated and do not make the first move toward involvement.

The only way to get over the intimidation factor is to take the first step: pick up the phone and call your State Senator and/or Representative, talk to his/her aide and tell them you are a nurse and a constituent and you would like to have a few minutes with the Legislator. Remember the one thing separating you from your Legislator is that he or she has run for political office and you didn’t. The Legislators are realtors®, teachers, nurses, automobile salesman—“ordinary people.” If the Legislator is not available when you are, there is great merit in talking to the Legislative Aide. In fact, you will want to get to know this person; this is your entrée to the Legislator. At some point, however, you will want to talk face-to-face with you Legislator so he or she knows who you are and so you can get a better sense of how this individual really feels about your issues. Take a nursing colleague with you, or if you have a specific issue of importance to you, take someone impacted by the issue. Once you do it you will be amazed at how easy it is.

You may go the first time to introduce yourself, let the Legislator know you are a nurse interested in healthcare issues and offer yourself as a resource. If the Legislator is a freshman, newly elected, you will want to introduce him or her to the FNA’s Legislative Agenda and help him/her become an “expert” in this area. In this case, it is good to take a one page summary of the issues and possibly 1 to 3 bullet points. FNA has these materials available to you, just ask.

Once you have overcome the intimidation factor, or if you are already past that stage, then it is time to figure out what you are interested in doing and, most importantly, how much time you have to devote to the candidate.

The volunteer possibilities are numerous and none more important than another. Volunteers are crucial to a campaign, local Legislators rarely have the money to have many if any paid staff so believe me anything you do is of great help and importance. Here are some of the possibilities:

**WALK WITH THE CANDIDATE:** Studies have shown the most effective way to get a vote is to knock on a door. If all you could give was one Saturday morning to walk a precinct for a candidate, this would be huge. Even bigger is to organize a one day “nurse’s walk” and get some colleagues to help.

**ENVELOPE STUFFING:** Ever think how those mail pieces got stamped and addressed? By volunteers sitting in a campaign office stamping, stuffing and sealing.

**TELEPHONE BANKING:** Many candidates have volunteers call constituents in the District to help get out the vote and ask for support. You are provided a script to use, often phones in a local office, you can use your cell phones or if it is difficult to get away from the house many candidates are willing to provide a list you can call from your home.

**YARD SIGNS:** One in your yard, ask your neighbors and friends to put one up. Also, you might offer to take a few hours one day, drive around and place signs in yards where people have asked for them.

**HOUSE PARTY:** Have a get together at your house and have a meet and greet, invite your neighbors and friends to come and meet the candidate. You might want to share the event with someone to help pay for light refreshments, it does not have to be an elaborate event; the idea is to provide the candidate the opportunity to meet potential voters. This is especially helpful if you live in a gated or restricted community. The only way a candidate can have access to these communities is by mail and by invitation, so believe me having a meet and greet in this venue would greatly appreciated.

**DONATIONS:** Money is an important piece in running a campaign. You may not have much to give, but no matter how small it buys something to help the campaign and for many this is all they feel they can do or want to do.
Quick Reference Guide:

Governor Charlie Crist:
850.488.4441
CharlieCrist@myflorida.com

Commissioner of Education, Dr Eric J. Smith:
850.487.1785
commissioner@fldoe.org

Commissioner of Agriculture, Charles H. Bronson:
850.488.3022
commissioner@doacs.state.fl.us

Lieutenant Governor, Jeff Kottkamp
850.488.4711
Jeff.Kottkamp@MyFlorida.com

Supreme Court of Florida
Chief Justice: 850.488.0007

Legislature
Senate President, Jeff Atwater
850.487.5100
atwater,jeff.web@flsenate.gov

Majority Leader, Adam Hasner
850.488.1993
Adam.Hasner@myfloridahouse.gov

Democratic Leader, Frankling Sands
850.488.9622
sands.franklin@myfloridahouse.gov

Secretary, Kurt S. Browning
850.245.6500
secretaryofstate@dos.state.fl.us

Document:
850.487.5915

Bill Drafting
850.487.5312

House Speaker, Larry Cretul
850.488.1450
cretul.larry@myfloridahouse.gov

Democratic Caucus Leader
850.488.9622

Republican Leader
850.487.5184

Clerk, William S. 'Bo' Pittman III
(850) 488-1157

Documents Room
850.488.7475

All State Government Numbers: 850.488.1234
Legislative Bill Status: 850.488.4371

KEY WEBSITES:
Florida City and County Government Information:
http://dlis.dos.state.fl.us/fgils/government.html

Florida City and County Government Reports:
www.statelocalgov.net/state-fl.htm

Florida’s Health:
www.doh.state.fl.us/floridahisc/Links/links.htm

Florida Health Statistics:
www.floridahealthstat.com

Florida House of Representatives:
www.myfloridahouse.gov

Florida Senate:
www.flsenate.gov

The Florida Monitor:
www.oppaga.state.fl.us/sites/health.html

The Governor and Cabinet:
www.myflorida.com/myflorida/cabinet/index.html

Brief Guide to State Facts:
www.ers.usda.gov/StateFacts

Census Bureau:
www.census.gov

Congressional Quarterly:
www.cq.com

Congressional Research Service Report
www.house.gov/rules/crs_reports.htm

Fednet:
www.fednet.net

Federal Register:
www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html

Health Finder:
www.healthfinder.gov


Thomas Legislative Information:
http://thomas.loc.gov

US Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions:
http://health.senate.gov
Quick Reference Guide:

HEALTH POLICY-SPECIFIC WEBSITES

Center for Health Policy Research and Ethics:
www.gmu.edu/departments/chpre/index.html

Duke Health Policy Cyber Exchange:
www.hpolicy.duke.edu/cyberexchange

Health Policy Coach/Center for Health Improvement:
www.healthpolicycoach.org

RELATED NURSING WEBSITES

Florida Nurses Association:
www.floridanurse.org

American Nurses Association, Government Affairs:
www.nursingworld.org/gova

ANA Political Action Committee:
nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/ANAPoliticalPower/ANAPAC.aspx
ana-pac@ana.org

Canada’s Office of Nursing Policy:
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/

FL Academy of Family Physician:
www.fafp.org

National Council of State of Board of Nursing:
www.ncsbn.org

MEDIA WEBSITES

ABC News:
www.abcnews.go.com

NBC News:
www.msnbc.com

CBS News:
www.cbsnews.com

CNN:
www.cnn.com

C-SPAN:
www.c-span.org

Fox News:
www.foxnews.com

The New York Times:
www.nytimes.com

USA Today:
www.usatoday.com

The Washington Post
www.washingtonpost.com

*Information is subject to change, based on changes to office that may occur in the near future.
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