Tips for Talking with Your Legislator

Keeping in mind that your goal is to develop an ongoing personal relationship with your elected representative, as well as to influence their position on specific issues or bills, here are a few things to remember when speaking to them:

- Know who your legislator is before making initial contact on an issue.
- Find out what legislative committees your legislator serves on.
- Do not be intimidated. Legislators will view you as an expert on the issue.
- Share your personal story if it helps to make your point.
- Do not assume that your legislator understands libraries and their impact on the community. Take the time to educate him/her. Do not use jargon.
- Know your issue. Provide facts and figures to back up your position. Refer to talking points and other materials.
- Remember all causes are good causes. You must convince your legislator that there is something extra special about yours.
- Put the legislator at ease by convincing him/her that you are there to serve as a resource. Act like a partner, not an adversary.
- Be a good listener and hear what your legislator has to say on the issue.
- Be sure to thank the legislator for taking the time to hear your position.
- Do not be disappointed if your legislator sends an aide. Aides are critical to the process.
- Be brief; prepared; clear; honest, accurate, persuasive, timely, persistent, and grateful.
- Always follow up with a written thank you note and amplify your main points.