



**The Nuts and Bolts of Legislative Advocacy**

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**The Conversation**

(Romare Bearden, 1977)

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**Goals Today**

- **Effective conversation when communicating with Legislators.**
- **Become a resource to your legislator.**
- **Become a resource to a committee office.**

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### The Legislative Visit



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### Who works for a Legislator?

- Staff who have earned or are working on degrees in public policy, finance, law, social work, etc.
- All are qualified to meet with you and to summarize your issue to their Legislator.

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### How many issues are presented to a legislative office in a day?



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**What is the job of the staff person receiving visitors?**

- Entering calls and visits into a software program.
- Recording your ideas to brief their Legislator.

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- They evaluate your input, determine problems needing solutions, funding required.
- They prioritize: All issues. Affordable issues. Passable issues.

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**They form an impression:  
Would this visitor be helpful  
in further discussions?**

**By your:**

- Experiences
- Expertise
- Contacts
- Problem solving.
- Ability to think globally.

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**Preparation for the Legislative Visit**



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**Consider bringing:**

- One page about your issue, using approximately three bullet points.
- Name, address, phone, email, on the document or a business card.
- A photo or story that makes it personal.

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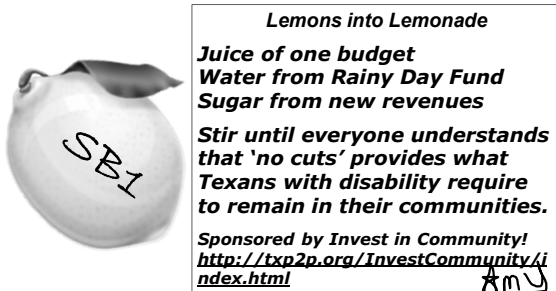
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**A sticker or trinket symbolizing your issue.  
Example: a lemon and a recipe card:**



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**If you don't already have an appointment:**

- "Good morning. Do you have a public policy specialist available who handles
- \_\_\_\_\_?"
  - Health and Human Services issues
  - Education issues
  - Accessible housing/transportation

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**How to present yourself:**

- Be friendly.
- Be honest to preserve credibility.
- Avoid yelling, bullying, threats, including to not vote for them.
- Emotions are fine, the one-Kleenex version.

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- Be flexible.
- Avoid absolutes.  
Say 'most', 'few', and 'in my case'.

XXX \_\_\_\_\_ XXX

In statistics, the outliers are ignored.  
In your visit, stay in the middle!

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**Understanding the Continuum**

- We need to recognize that ADA and IDEA are relatively new. A lack of safeguards in earlier decades has created a long continuum of experiences and placements today.

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**Avoid adding a second or third issue!**



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**To close the meeting:**

- Thank them, of course.
- Ask for their card and later write the issue and date on it.
- Follow up with an email.

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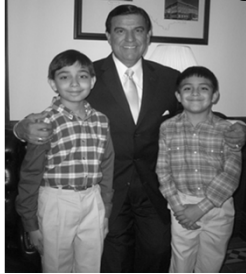
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**You may get to meet with your actual legislator:**



Joseph Chase Castillo,  
Senator Eddie Lucio Jr., Jake  
Mackenzie Castillo



Senator Eddie Lucio Jr., Monica  
Medrano-Castillo, Horacio  
Castillo

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**Emails and letters:**

- If you cannot go meet them.
- Keep it simple, a paragraph for each point.
- Make frequent contact.
- Vote in elections (they check).

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**The Bill Hearing**



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### The Committee Who Hears Your Bill

- Established in mid-January. Listed in:
  - Texas Directory  
<http://www.txdirectory.com/online>
  - Texas Legislature Online (TLO)  
<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us>
- Who are the chairman and vice chairman – background, political party, day job?
- Are bill sponsors/ cosponsors on this committee? Hopefully they are.

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### Bill Hearing Schedules

- Using TLO, note when your committee meets, for example, every Tuesday. Watch for your bill on their schedule.
- Sign up on TLO to track changes to the bill.
- To receive bill alerts, join Texas Parent Advocates, by sending an email to [txpacs-subscribe@yahoogleups.com](mailto:txpacs-subscribe@yahoogleups.com)

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### Preparing your Testimony

- Open with your name, your city or county. Thank them for letting you speak.
- State your problem, discuss a few details, state the solution, making sure to specifically say that you are FOR or AGAINST bill # \_\_\_\_.
- Thank them again, and ask if there are any questions.
- (A 3-minute testimony is usually one page of typing).

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### Further prep...



- **Optional: Find an expert to say if it covers the bill at hand .**
- **Bring 15 copies of your testimony - or you are welcome to speak extemporaneously and, later, the committee will transcribe your words from a recording.**

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### Entering a Hearing

- **Park in a pink sandstone garage at 12th and San Jacinto, or park at a meter.**
- **Find the hearing room, sign a witness card and take it to the clerk up front.**
- **The chairman schedules agencies to testify before accepting general testimony.**
- **If you cannot stay, submit it as written only. It will be just as official.**

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### Oral Testimony

- **Once called, go to the microphone and face the committee to begin.**
- **If you don't know an answer, offer to email one later. If their questions are too personal, decline to answer them.**
- **Sometimes I abandon my script to instead rebut what someone else said.**

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***Nervous about testifying?***

- Texas Parent to Parent and TXPACS will support you throughout the process:

[TxP2P-AdvocacyListserv-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:TxP2P-AdvocacyListserv-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

[Txpacs-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:Txpacs-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

- YouTube clips of Texas teens giving testimony can be found online at: <http://txylf.tamu.edu/testimonials.htm>

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**Further Leadership**

Ongoing phone calls are important to:

- Advise a committee member how to vote.
- Advise a Senator or Rep how to vote.
- Advise the Governor what bills to sign.

(Before publishing an alert, follow your own instructions to discover typos in addresses or phone numbers.)

Join forces with others at a press conference:

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**Next rally: Monday, March 11, 2013**




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