

PRO-LIFE GUIDE TO PUBLIC POLICY

HOW TO ENGAGE YOUR LEGISLATORS

It is critical that local pro-life individuals, organizations, and churches engage their state legislators on a regular basis in both friendly discussion and communication on pro-life topics. Local relationships with legislators can help ensure a long-term pro-life commitment, especially when there are difficult votes facing the legislators at the Capitol.

It is highly recommended that you form a “Right to Life Chapter” (i.e. Tangipahoa Right to Life) in your local community so you can communicate with legislators under the name of a group that can bring various people and churches together. Keep in mind that there is no requirement to create a formal organization with bank accounts, tax filings, etc to do this. *Communicate with Louisiana Right to Life staff to learn more.*

We recommend the following steps for local engagement with legislators.

1

Find out who your legislators are.

By visiting www.legis.la.gov and clicking on “Who Are My Legislators?” you can identify your State Senator and Representative.

SCAN HERE TO
FIND YOUR
LEGISLATORS!



2

Get a group together.

Whether it is a collection of individuals from your church pro-life group, local right to life chapter, or other organization, form a group that will meet with the state legislator. If possible, it is best to get group of individuals from various walks of life together (pastor, priest, businessperson, pregnancy center director, pro-life captain, etc).

3

Request a meeting.

During a time when the legislature is NOT meeting, ideally in the fall, call the legislator or their office and request a meeting, ideally at a casual location like a coffee shop. The first meeting request should not be focused on a specific pro-life topic or need, but rather, just to introduce your group and meet the legislator.

4

Have the meeting.

During the first meeting, the goal is to build a relationship with the legislator rather than tell the legislator what to do. Learn about their personal life, their family, their work, and what motivated them to run for office. Ask them about the pro-life convictions and if there is anything in their background that led them to that perspective.

You also want to take time to share with them the pro-life efforts that are underway in their district, especially pro-life service efforts like pregnancy help centers. Invite them to visit the local pregnancy center for a tour with you and your group.

If the topic comes up, you can address what pro-life issues you are concerned about and how you need their assistance.

5

Stay connected with the legislator.

After the meeting, communicate with the legislator on an ongoing basis, striving to touch base at least quarterly, if not more. Share with them pro-life events and issue (without overloading them). Invite legislators to local pro-life events or pregnancy center fundraisers. Attend events or efforts put on by legislators (see legal information below).

6

Meet before session.

In January or February, touch base with Louisiana Right to Life about pro-life issues that could come up in the upcoming legislative session. With that information, touch base with the legislator again through a meeting or phone call to put those issues on their radar, and also ask if they have they believe is an important issue.

7

During session.

If possible, attend Pro-Life Day at the Capitol or another day during the session to visit the legislator. You can also be in touch with them remotely about important issues or votes that may come up during session. Ask them to vote pro-life during session!

8

After session.

Thank legislators who voted pro-life for their votes during session! At any events, be sure to recognize them and thank them for their pro-life votes.

Legal Notes

There is nothing that prevents representatives of a church or other 501c3 organization from engaging legislators, as long as the engagement meets the following rules:

- Substantial Monetary Activity: A 501c3 or church should not spend “substantial” resources for engagement with legislators. Nothing in the document above even comes remotely close to this line.
- No political activity: 501c3 organizations and churches are prohibited by IRS regulations from engaging in political activity to support or oppose a candidate for office, including contributing funds to a candidate’s campaign . All the information listed above constitutes legislative advocacy and not political advocacy.
 - Nothing stops a church or organization from discussing issues and a candidate’s stance, as long as the discussion does not support or oppose a candidate for office.
 - Nothing stops any private citizen in their own capacity from engaging in political advocacy or contributing to a candidate’s campaign.



STAY UP-TO-DATE!

www.ProLifeLouisiana.org