

# TEN REASONS

For many of us, lobbying is something other people do—people who wear fancy clothes and buy politicians lunch at expensive restaurants. But lobbying is something that anyone can do. And it is something all of us should do if we believe in a good cause and in a democratic form of government. Here are ten reasons why:

## **1 YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.**

It takes one person to initiate change. See the story of Gerry Jensen on page 12, a single mother who helped build the Association for Children for Enforcement of Support, which has helped change child support laws across the country. One person—a single mother—made the difference.

## **2 PEOPLE WORKING TOGETHER CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.**

Mothers Against Drunk Driving convinced dozens of states to toughen up their drunk driving laws. The result: fewer drunk-driving deaths.

## **3 PEOPLE CAN CHANGE LAWS.**

Our history is full of stories of people and groups that fought great odds to make great changes: limits on child labor, public schools, clean air and water, social security. These changes weren't easy to achieve. Some took decades. They all took the active involvement—the lobbying—of people who felt something needed to be changed.

## **4 LOBBYING HELPS FIND REAL SOLUTIONS.**

Services provided directly to people in need, such as soup kitchens, emergency health clinics, and homeless shelters, are essential. But sometimes it's not enough. People thinking creatively and asking their elected officials for support can generate innovative solutions that overcome the root cause of a problem.

# TO LOBBY FOR YOUR CAUSE

## **5 POLICYMAKERS NEED YOUR EXPERTISE.**

Few institutions are closer to the real problems of people than community-based nonprofits. You see problems first-hand. You know the needs. You see what works and what doesn't. You can put a "human face" on problems to make them real to policymakers.

## **6 THE VIEWS OF LOCAL NONPROFITS ARE IMPORTANT.**

Increasingly, local governments decide how to spend federal money, giving local nonprofits even more opportunity to have an immediate, concrete impact on people in need.

## **7 LOBBYING IS EASY.**

Many of us think lobbying is some mysterious rite that takes years to master. It isn't. You can learn how to lobby—whom to call, when, what to say—in minutes. Later in this guide, you'll learn the straightforward rules your organization needs to follow, as well as strategies to make you effective.

## **8 LOBBYING HELPS PEOPLE.**

Some people become concerned that lobbying detracts from their mission, but quite the opposite is true. Everything that goes into a lobbying campaign—the research, the strategy planning, the phone calls and visits—will help fulfill your end goal. Lobbying can enhance your direct service. Lobbying can be your best service.

## **9 LOBBYING ADVANCES YOUR CAUSE AND BUILDS PUBLIC TRUST.**

By increasing your visibility and strengthening relationships with government officials, lobbying can help you build public trust and support—essential to achieving your organization's mission.

## **10 LOBBYING IS A DEMOCRATIC TRADITION.**

The act of telling our policymakers how to write and change our laws is at the very heart of our democratic system. Lobbying has helped to keep America's democracy robust for more than two centuries.