



LIFETIME Parent Leadership Committee

Five Easy Steps To A Successful Legislative Visit

Developing a relationship with your state legislator and their key staff will be critical to prevent a wave of state budget cuts to services and programs that benefit the poorest Californians. Here is a set of five easy steps to make sure that you communicate our message: **Governor Schwarzenegger's proposed cuts will decimate programs that help move people from poverty to self-sufficiency.**

To set up the meeting call the offices of your legislator and ask to meet directly with your Senator or State Assembly Member. Meet with staff or legislative aides only as a fall back because they are usually unable to make concrete commitments on behalf of the legislator. If you must meet with staff, target the chief of staff or chief legislative aide first. Once the meeting is set, the following basic agenda should ensure a successful meeting.

1. Introductions

Open the meeting and tell them you are here as members of LIFETIME. People should introduce themselves and say the name of the organization they represent, if they receive CalWORKs, where they attend school, and how many children they have.

2. The Story of Your Visit

Each participant should have a story to tell that illustrates how the cuts will hurt them or their families. These stories should be dramatic and show the legislator the specific harm of the cuts.

3. Get Specific Commitments

Following each story you must ask the legislator to make a commitment. For example, after a story about the suspension of the COLAs, ask: "Will you oppose the suspension of COLAs?" Get specific YES or NO answers or at the very least get staff aides to commit to getting you a YES or NO answer.

4. Review the Commitments

Confirm your understanding of what your legislator has committed to. For example, ask the representative "You have committed to oppose the COLA suspensions and to not support cuts to childcare. Is this correct?"

5. Let them know You Will Follow-Up

If you met with a staff aide be sure to request a direct meet with the legislator. Give them a time frame to get back to you on specific commitments. Let them know you will stay in touch and watch their positions on these issues. Make sure that you give them your contact information: your name and phone number. Thank them for their time.