

AFFORDABLE HOUSING COALITION OF SOUTH CAROLINA, INC.

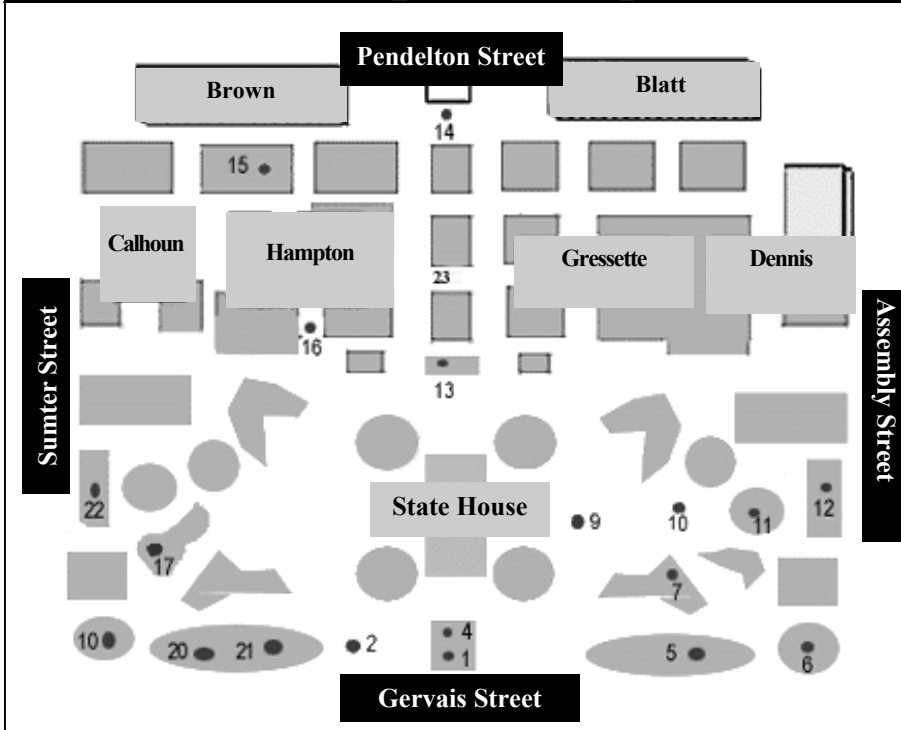


EFFECTIVE STATEWIDE ADVOCACY GUIDELINES

A very special thanks to the South Carolina Association of Non Profits (SCANPO) for providing most of the material contained herein.



Map of the South Carolina State Capital Complex



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| 1. Confederate Monument | 16. Gen. W. Hampton Monument |
| 2. Spanish-American War Monument | 17. Cork Oak Tree |
| 3. B. Tillman Monument | 18. Revolutionary General's Monument |
| 4. Statue of George Washington | 19. J. F. Byrnes Monument. |
| 5. R.E. Lee Hwy. Marker | 20. Jefferson Davis Hwy. Marker |
| 6. J. M. Sims Monument | 21. Gun from the Battleship Maine |
| 7. Old State House Monument | 22. City of Columbia Time Capsule |
| 8. Washington Elm | 23. Strom Thurmond Statue |
| 9. Bronze Stars | |
| 10. Palmetto Regiment Monument | |
| 11. Cannon Base | <i>The Blatt Building is the office building for House members.</i> |
| 12. Grave-Capt. Lunsford | |
| 13. Gen. Richardson Monument | <i>The Gressette Building is the office building for Senate members.</i> |
| 14. Confederate Women Monument | |
| 15. Liberty Bell | |

EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY GUIDELINES FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING COALITION MEMBERS

Table of Contents

About the AHC of SC

How A Bill Becomes an Act

The ABC's of Presenting Your Case

SC Budget Basics

How to Communicate with Your Legislators

Letter Writing Do's and Don'ts

Personal Visits to Your Legistors

Testifying at Public Hearings

South Carolina Capital Complex Map

About the . . .

AFFORDABLE HOUSING COALITION OF SOUTH CAROLINA

**What you should know BEFORE contacting your
public officials!**

Our Vision

All low income people of South Carolina reside in quality, affordable housing.

Our Mission

*Be the lead advocate for South Carolina's low and moderate income people
by educating the public and marshalling the resources to work toward our vision.*

Our Belief

South Carolina has the resources, the compassion, the creativity, and, the capability to achieve our vision.

The Affordable Housing Coalition of South Carolina, Inc. is the collective group that speaks for access to affordable housing in our state. Please join our efforts to improve access for everyone. Participating in our public policy programs is a key way in which to meet our goals. Be a part of our efforts by reading the materials sent to you from the state office and by contacting your legislator when asked. Together we can make a difference. It takes all of us.



What limitations on time has (or will) the committee set; how can the proponents' time be used best?

It is important that coalition members agree on who will testify. Give each witness a specific topic to cover according to his or her expertise, and make every effort to avoid repetition. Agree on the sequence in which witnesses should appear, in order to present the "pro" arguments most effectively. Where witnesses who are not members of the coalition are desirable, begin lining them up early, since refusals will necessitate further search for the kind of witnesses you want. Make every effort to find out which opponents are going to testify and to anticipate their arguments with refutations in the proponents' testimony. In preparing testimony, legislative, public relations, and resource or research people should all contribute their ideas: resource – facts to back the points to be covered; legislative – political knowledge of which approach will carry the most weight with the committee; public relations – the kind of language that has the greatest value in appealing to the media and persuading the public.

On the day of the hearing, report the arrival of witnesses to a coordinator to ensure that their presence is noted by the committee. Give the legislative committee chairperson (whom you will already have convinced to cooperate on this matter) a list of witnesses in the order you want them to appear. Some member of the coalition should be responsible for collecting all statements of endorsement brought to the hearing and presenting them to the committee at an appropriate time.

The Public Relations and Policy Committees should prepare press kits, which might include: a fact sheet on the legislation; status of similar legislation in other states; a flyer; copies of major testimony; the names of other prominent and influential endorsers; a press release summarizing the main points of the testimony.



Source: "Making an Issue of It: The Campaign Handbook," copyrighted by League of Women Voters of the U.S.



ABCs of Presenting Your Case

Maybe you are visiting your legislator to ask for support for a bill. Maybe you are making a statement to the media about a position that your nonprofit organization has taken. Whether you are lobbying a legislator or talking to the press, knowing the ABC's of presenting your case will spell success.

- A.** First you need **A PLAN** for what you want to accomplish!
- B.** **BE PREPARED** by outlining your presentation. Take the time to write out the message that you need to get across. Boil your message down to its essential points (about thirty words or so). Remember that you can use four different kinds of statements to back up your message: personal example, statistics, endorsement by a third party, or comparisons to explain. Try not to use any technical language.
- C.** **CONTROL** the presentation by not being sidetracked and by not closing the interview until you feel that you have accomplished as much as possible at that particular meeting. You can do this by stating your position positively. Do not argue or be confrontational. Remember to thank the legislator or reporter for his/her time and interest.

- *Be brief.*
- *Be courteous.*
- *Be honest and forthright. (Answer only those questions you can answer accurately, and say that you will get information on questions that you cannot answer.)*
- *Be assertive (firm) about your concerns and views.*
- *Give your reason for taking the position you have.*
- *Get as much clarity as possible on the legislator's position, concerns, or problems and his/her reasons for taking a particular position.*
- *Don't be argumentative.*
- *Don't make threats or promises.*
- *Don't berate or hassle your legislator.*
- *Don't pretend to wield a great deal of power. (i.e., pretend to represent hundreds of constituents – unless, of course, you actually do.)*
- *Don't demand a commitment if there is any reticence to acknowledge support.*



It is usually best to visit your legislators in small groups – three people are optimum – and to keep your visits as brief as you can. Going alone may be unsatisfactory because legislators may try to out-talk you or you may reach an impasse too quickly. You should convey the impression that these three people are representatives of many more; if each of the three represents a different organization, their potential voting power will maximize your lobbying impact.

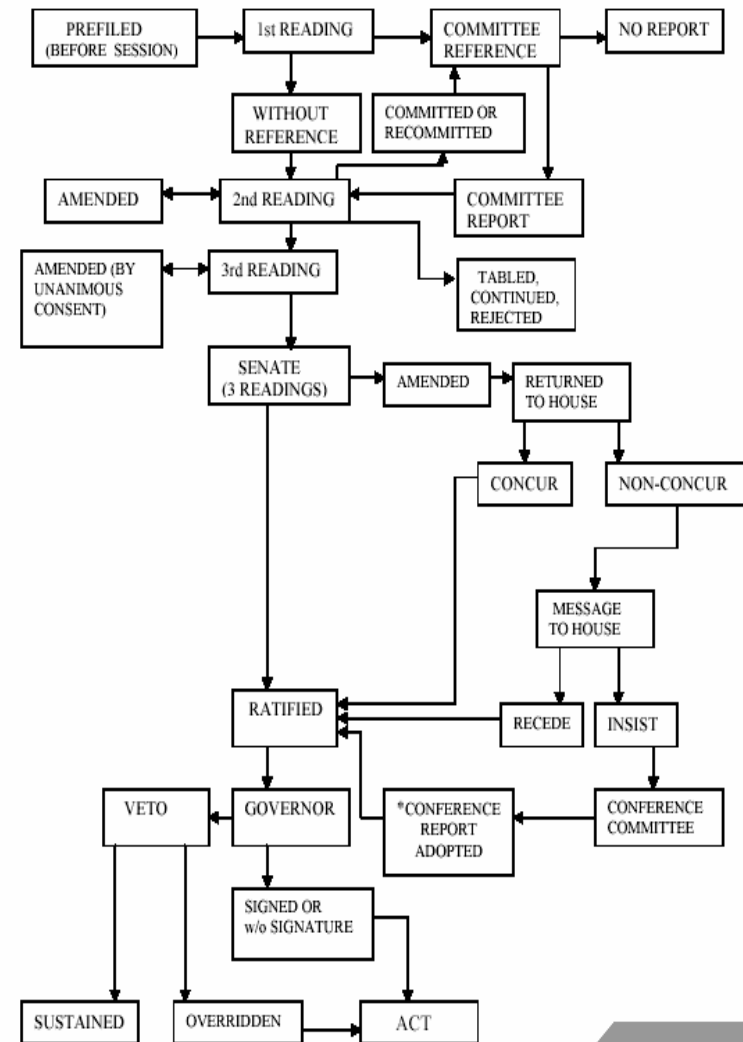


SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONAL VISITS TO LEGISLATORS

One of the most effective ways to communicate with legislators is in face-to-face contacts with them. The following are recommendations for personal visits with legislators:

1. Before contacting legislators, become familiar with the problem or issue you are concerned about.
2. Call ahead and make an appointment with the legislator (s) you wish to speak with. Let them know what you wish to discuss.
3. Introduce yourself.
4. Make sure to explain your organizational affiliation. If you or members of your organization are constituents of the legislator, emphasize this fact.
5. State the intensity of your concern over the issue you will discuss.
6. State each of your recommendations in simple and concise terms; state the reasons for your position; restate your recommendation.
7. Ask the legislator if he/she has any questions. Take notes on the questions and problems raised; if you are unsure of the answer, advise him/her that you will have another person from your organization provide the information on the question or problem.
8. Repeat this format for each and every one of your recommendations.
9. Conclude by restating and summarizing your recommendations as well as the intensity of your concern over these issues.
10. Ask the legislator whether he/she will support your recommendations. If he/she will not, try to determine the reason for his/her position.
11. Thank the legislator for his/her time and let him/her know you will be watching with interest the legislative decision-making process on the particular issue.
12. Observe these do's and don'ts:

How a Bill Originating in the House Becomes an Act



**If a Conference Report is rejected, the bill may by a two-thirds vote of each House be referred to a Committee of Free Conference*

South Carolina Budget Basics

Did you know?

The State Constitution requires the Governor to submit a balanced budget.

The State Constitution requires the Legislature to pass a balanced budget.

The State Constitution requires the Governor to sign a balanced budget.

STATE BUDGET CALENDAR

August:	Budget Guidelines sent to Agency
October:	Agency Requests Submitted to Governor
January:	Governor Submits Budget to Legislature
June:	Legislature Adopts Budget
July:	New Fiscal Year Begins

THE BUDGET PROCESS

It Begins With the Governor.....The Governor is required to submit an Executive Budget to the General Assembly. The Executive Budget must contain a complete and itemized plan of all proposed expenditures for each state department or other agency, beginning with the first day of the next fiscal year (a fiscal year begins July 1 and ends June 30). Opposite each item of the proposed expenditures, the detailed budget document must show the amount appropriated for the last preceding appropriation year, for the current appropriation year and the increase or decrease.

Then to the House.....Legislative debate on the General Appropriation bill begins with the House Ways and Means Committee. Members of the Ways and Means Committee are divided into subcommittees, and each subcommittee is assigned a functional area of the budget such as corrections or public education. The subcommittees meet and develop budget recommendations for presentation to the full committee. The Ways and Means Committee then presents its version of the budget bill to the full House. The House of Representatives usually debates the bill and considers amendments for three days; however, the length of debate can and does vary. State law requires the House to give third reading of the General Appropriation bill by the end of March or the legislative session is extended.

DO write the chairman or members of a committee holding hearings on legislation in which you are interested. Remember, however, that you have more influence with Senators from your state and Representatives from your district than with other members of Congress.

DON'T sign and send a form or mimeograph letter.

DON'T begin on the righteous note of "as a citizen and taxpayer." Your elected Representative assumes you are not an alien, and he/she knows we all pay taxes.

DON'T apologize for writing and taking his/her time. If your letter is short and expresses your opinion, he/she is glad to give you a hearing.

DON'T say, "I hope this gets by your secretary." This only irritates the office staff.

DON'T be rude or threatening. It will get you nowhere.

DON'T be vague. Some letters received in Congressional offices are couched in such general terms that they leave the Senator or Representative and his/her staff wondering what the writer had in mind.

DON'T (just because you disagree politically with your Senator or Representative) ignore him/her and write to one from another district or state. Congressional courtesy calls for the recipient of such a letter to forward it to the Congressman from the district or state involved.

DON'T send a carbon copy to your second Senator or Representative when you have addressed the letter to the first Senator. Write each one individually; it's the courteous thing to do.



Source: *The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin, Inc.*



THE FUNDAMENTAL DO'S & DON'TS OF LETTER WRITING

DO address your Senator or Representative properly.

DO write legibly (handwritten letters are fine if they are readable).

DO be brief and to the point; discuss only one issue in each letter; identify a bill by number or title if possible.

DO use your own words and your own stationery.

DO be sure to include your address and sign your name legibly. If your name could be either masculine or feminine, identify your sex. If you have family, business, or political connections related to the issue, explain them. They may serve as identification when your point of view is considered.

DO be courteous and reasonable.

DO feel free to write if you have a question or problem dealing with procedures of government departments. Congressional offices can often help you cut through red tape or give you advice that will save you time and wasted effort.

DO write when your spokesperson in Lansing or Washington does something of which you approve. Public officials hear mostly from constituents who oppose their actions. A barrage of criticism gives them a one-sided picture of their constituencies. (A note of appreciation will make your Senator or Representative remember you favorably the next time you write.)

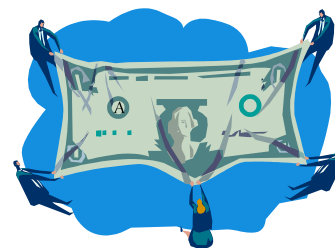
DO include pertinent editorials from local papers.

DO write early in the session before a bill has been introduced if you have ideas about an issue you would like to see incorporated in legislation. If you are “lobbying” for or against a bill and your Senator or Representative is a member of the committee to which it has been referred, write when the committee begins hearings. If he/she is not a member of the committee handling the bill, write him/her just before the bill comes to the floor for debate and vote.

Then to the Senate....After passage by the House, the bill is sent to the Senate and referred to the Senate Finance Committee. As is the practice in the House, Senate Finance committee members are organized into subcommittees by functional areas. The Senate Finance Committee then recommends a budget bill to the full Senate. The budget is usually not passed by the Senate until late in the session (May).

And if the House and Senate Versions Do Not Agree.....When the House and Senate have passed differing versions of an appropriation bill, a six member conference committee (three House members and Six Senators) is appointed to develop a compromise bill. In developing a recommendation for a compromise budget bill, the conference committee does not have the power to insert any new matter which is not in the House or Senate version or to alter or delete any matter agreed upon by both houses. If the insertion of new matter is necessary to develop a compromise, a member of the conference committee may move that the conference committee be resolved into a committee of free conference. If free conference powers are granted by both the House and Senate, the committee may rewrite the bill. When the conferees from both houses agree on a budget, their report is sent to both Houses for adoption.

And Back to the Governor.....After the General Assembly has passed the state budget, the Governor has the power to veto distinct items or sections which have been labeled as such by the General Assembly. In 1998 the State Supreme Court ruled that the Governor cannot strike individual sentences or parts of sentences in a bill appropriating money. If the Governor vetoes an item or items in an appropriation bill, the bill becomes law as to the remaining sections of the bill. The procedure for consideration of the Governor's vetoes by the two houses is the same as for other bills, except that only vetoed items are considered and not the entire bill. Each vetoed item is considered separately, with a two-thirds vote in both houses necessary to override the Governor's veto on each item.



How to Communicate with Legislators

If you are not a full-time political activist, you may be approaching the political process like a freshman sitting in an Algebra class. If you are, do not worry. Many feel the way you do. But, once they have a little coaching and a little experience, many novices become enthusiastic about participation in the legislative process. Take heart - just as thousands of students across the state successfully unravel the mysteries of Algebra each year, if you follow these simple suggestions, soon you will know your way around the marble floors of the State House.

1. **Know your representatives.** Get to know your representative on a personal basis. It is critical that you know who represents you and that your representative knows the issues that are important to you. If you do not know your representative, how can you hold him or her accountable? Unless you know who represents you, the legislative report card (i.e. the representative's voting record) will mean nothing to you. While it is critical that you know your personal representative, you must also know any and all other legislators that will have a vote on the issue that is of interest to you. View the legislative process as a series of spaces on a game board, with each set of decision-makers as a new hurdle, and concentrate on the next group of people to be voting on your issue. Do not feel that you have to tell every legislator about your bill or issue at one time. The focused approach is better. When applying the focused approach, think of yourself as a detective. As a detective, you must figure out why each legislator should have an interest in your side of an issue. What is his or her current and former occupations, business associations, club memberships, hobbies, past-times, causes he or she supports or opposes, characteristics of constituents, personal wealth, personality, and past and present committee assignments. When communicating with your legislators, state your cause in terms of the legislator's needs and beliefs - not yours.

2. **Know how to communicate with your representative.** When you can, communicate **in person** but be sure to make an appointment in advance. Remember to be brief, specific, courteous, and positive. Thank your legislator for his or her time and follow up the visit with a note. When **telephoning** your representative, similar rules apply. Remember to call during normal business hours. Refrain from calling elected officials at odd times because they have other jobs and families as well. When **writing** to legislators limit yourself to only one subject. Identify yourself and the purpose of the letter first. If you are writing about specific legislation, cite the house of origin and the bill number. Write the letter in your own words; never use

a form letter. Limit the letter to one page and avoid negative or threatening language. (This is not the time to state that you are a citizen and a taxpayer.) If you feel strongly about an issue, it is okay to show some emotion in your letter. A handwritten letter is acceptable so long as it is legible. Always proofread and review your letters before actually mailing them and address your letters properly. Remember the same rules apply to email as it is a written correspondence to your elected official. When corresponding by email to your legislator, still pay attention to the rules of grammar.

3. **Know relevant legislative staff.** All legislators rely on their staffers. Legislative staffers assist legislators in a variety of ways from research to organizing their schedules. It is important to know that legislative staffers are not policy makers, and they are prohibited from taking a personal interest in the passage of legislation. Remember that public officials and employees are subject to the SC Ethics Reform Act of 1991. The duty of legislative staff is to provide objective, factual information and data, but they often lack the time to be fully acquainted with every issue. You may know an issue better or in greater depth than they do, so you may be in a position to educate staff. Whenever you assist legislative staff, you may very well be assisting yourself in the process.

4. **Know your issue.** Nothing is probably more critical than knowing your issue inside and out. Conduct a thorough analysis of the facts. Research and discuss both the pros and cons of the issue, using unbiased, non-partisan information that cuts through political rhetoric and focuses on the essential facts. It is particularly important that you find out as much as possible about your opposition and their arguments. Get your hands on as much of their propaganda as possible: pamphlets, books, newspaper articles, or anything in which they have made a public statement. Being familiar with this information will enable you to prepare to persuasively rebut their position. Do not forget to consider the effects that your issue will have on other issues. In other words, take a few moments to look at the big picture.

5. **Know how to work in coalition with like-minded organizations.** One of the major problems most groups have, especially groups without a continuing, long-standing presence at the capitol, is getting legislators' attention. Legislators are confronted with numerous issues and causes, all of which are competing for their time. You can amplify your message and gain legislative attention if you work in coalition with like-minded organizations. Working in coalition offers a huge advantage to working on your own. Even though you have a large network of members and supporters you have limited resources. You can do an awful lot on your own, but you can do an awful lot more if you work with other groups and combine resources.