

Q&A Regarding Lobbying, Legislative Session and Lobby Day

Question 1: What is Lobbying?

Answer: When you are meeting with a legislator or other elected officials and discussing the issue of sexual violence, services provided by your programs, or any other issue, that is not lobbying. That would be considered education and the sharing of information. If you ask a legislator or any other elected official for something specifically, then you are lobbying. For instance, asking for their support of a bill or a budget item. What is actually considered "lobbying" is usually a very short amount of the time you spend in contact with any elected official.

Question 2: Can my program lobby and how do I code my time?

Answer: Again, meetings with elected officials can be seen as an opportunity to educate them on the issue of sexual violence and share information with them. You can meet with your legislator and not lobby at all and many times that may very well be what you do. Again, only if you ask for something specific is that considered lobbying.

As to how you code your time if you do lobby, i.e. ask an elected official for something specific, you need to check with the executives at your program regarding how you code your time as it is agency specific. Some programs may have a policy that requires you take personal time to lobby an elected official however it is important to bear in mind that you can have a meeting with an elected official and not lobby at all, if what you are doing is educating them on the issue of sexual violence and sharing information about your program and the services you provide.

Question 3: Why do we tend to get talking points and other handouts for Lobby Day at the last minute?

Answer: The bills that we are tracking can change very suddenly, hearings may be scheduled for the day of the event and amendments can be introduced and there is not always fiscal information available. Things are always changing and it is important that we have the most up-to-date information to share with you before you meet with your legislators. Oftentimes we do not have that information ourselves until just before the event. We work very diligently to get info to you promptly and to keep legislative websites current.

One way to stay on top of the bills that we are tracking is to use our [Legislative Action Center](#) to research the list of bills we are tracking. As it is in line with our Legislative Agenda, the top tier items on the agenda are always going to be our focus on Lobby Day. Each bill that is listed links directly to the Washington State Legislature's bill listing page and the link will show you the status of that particular bill, hearings that have been held, amendments that

have been introduced, etc. This is a very useful resource so please bookmark it in your Internet browser and use it!

Always remember this important tip when meeting with your legislators: if you are asked a question about a piece of legislation we are supporting and you do not know the answer, tell them that you will get back to them or their staff as soon as you can. WCSAP is here to provide you with that information whether it is prior to your meetings with your elected officials or in follow-up conversations with them.

WCSAP's Legislative Action Center: <http://capwiz.com/wcsap/home/>

Question 4: On Lobby Day, how come we often may miss hearing the WCSAP Lobbyist and the Executive Director speak to us about the legislation we are targeting and how best to talk to our legislators when we meet with them?

Answer: We always set an agenda in place with a specific time (between 10:00 - 11:00 AM) when we have our Lobbyist and the WCSAP ED speak to our participants. However as noted above, things are always changing at the legislature and we may not know until the day before or even the day of the event if the WCSAP ED or Lobbyist need to testify, which could pull them both away from the slated talking times. However, one is usually always available. WCSAP staff will be on hand for the entire event so if you miss the scheduled briefing you can get important information from any of them. That said, securing a meeting with your legislator is the top priority so you may very well miss out on WCSAP's presentation.

We have to remain flexible as schedules change constantly therefore it is critical that you research your legislators and the bills we are tracking before you arrive at Lobby Day. Focus on the top tier agenda items of the WCSAP Legislative Agenda (which you will have well before the Lobby Day event) and visit our Legislative Action Center:

Everything you need to research these bills can be found at WCSAP's Legislative Action Center: <http://capwiz.com/wcsap/home/>

Also be sure to access the Washington State Legislative website to research your legislators: <http://www.leg.wa.gov/pages/home.aspx>

We recommend you look at the committees they sit on, bills they have sponsored and just familiarize yourself with them by reading their bios as it will make your meetings much more enjoyable and you will be able to establish that most important relationship with your elected officials. Remember, you elect your legislators into office and they want to hear from you, their constituents!

Question 5: Why do we get requests during session to contact our legislators regarding the same bill over and over again?

Answer: As you probably know, a bill has to go through a very long process through both houses of the legislature in order to become law and that is why you receive so many requests from us to take action on the same bill. Your input is crucial in helping your legislators make informed decisions on how they will vote on a particular bill and as the bill is amended and changed through this process, we need your voices to be heard regarding the importance of the legislation and how it assists you in serving victims and survivors of sexual violence.

To make sense of this, here is a very simple explanation of how a bill becomes a law (courtesy of the [WA State Legislature](#)):

1. A bill is introduced (by the sponsor) in the House or the Senate and assigned a number
2. The bill is referred to the appropriate committee and possibly a public hearing is held
3. A committee report is read in open session of the House or Senate and the bill is then referred to the Rules Committee whereupon the Rules Committee can place the bill on the second reading of the calendar or no action is taken at all
4. At second reading the bill is subject to debate and amendment before being placed on the third reading calendar for final passage
5. After passing one house, the bill goes through the same procedure in the other house
6. If amendments are made in one house then the other house must concur
7. When the bill is accepted by both houses it is signed by the respective leaders and sent to the Governor
8. The Governor will sign the bill or veto all or part of it. If the Governor fails to take action on the bill it will become law without their signature.

As you can see, a bill goes through many stages and we need your support through all of them, hence we may contact you numerous times regarding the same bill. We will keep you notified of the bills we are tracking as they are moving, i.e., are they in committee hearings, in amendment, at floor debates, have they died, or will they be signed into law. A bill has successfully passed all the stages when it arrives on the desk of the Governor to be signed into law. When a bill is signed by the Governor there is usually a photo opportunity that you may attend, and if we are given enough notice we will let you know the date and time so we can stand together representing our cause and show our support for newly passed legislation that enhances survivor rights in Washington.

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