

# Advocacy Training Breakout

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312.321.1500 | [www.nkfi.org](http://www.nkfi.org) | [www.kidneymobile.org](http://www.kidneymobile.org)

# Folder Content Review

- Individual legislation sheet and district numbers
- It's easy! How a bill becomes a bill in Illinois!
- Letter templates: Introduction and Thank You
- Advocacy Brochures
- Representative/Senator report back form
  - This form should be completed after each meeting or phone call with your legislator and mailed or faxed back to the NKFI within 24 hours of meeting
  - Report allows us to track who has been approached and on what issues
  - Report provides information on issues discussed and allows a staff person to follow-up if necessary
- Fact Sheets
  - Should be shared with legislators
  - Utilized as a reference for your speaking points
- Evaluation form on today training, please submit prior to leaving!



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# Current legislation

- Federal: H.R. 3282 Comprehensive Immunosuppressive Drug Coverage for Kidney Transplant Patients Act of 2007
- State- No current bills therefore let's focus on...
  - Increase knowledge on living donation
  - Increase knowledge on *Gift of Life Advocates*
    - Provide contact information and brochure
  - Discuss need for registration in State Organ Donor Program
  - Share statistics on transplantation



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# Identifying your role as an advocate

## The Timid Visitor

- Quiet, intimidated, uncomfortable, and unsure of what to say
  - “I’m at this conference and they scheduled this appointment for me, but I don’t really know what to do.”
  - “I’m not sure what this bill is, it has something to do with....”
  - “Do you know what bill I’m talking about?”

VS.

## The Passionate Advocate

- Enthusiastic and committed
  - Thanks the legislator for time and lays out exactly what he/she is asking for
  - Uses facts and figures
  - Uses example of why the piece of legislation will help constituents



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# Identifying your role as an advocate continued...

## The Relationship Builder

- Example: returning visitor who has met the legislator at previous events
  - Use names of staff and public events where you've seen the legislator (no fundraisers or campaign events)
  - Reference past meetings
  - Reference people you both know
  - Thank the legislator again for things they've done to support you in the past
  - Explain why this is important this year

## The Campaigner

- You have been a contributor to the legislator's campaign before and you mention it to whomever you're meeting
  - I've given money to your campaign before so I expect your support on this issue if you expect me to do so again
  - Some comments are more casual: when is the Congressman's next fundraiser? I enjoyed the last one and am looking forward to attending again



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# Steps for Contacting Legislators

## Pre-Meeting Steps:

1. Call your local legislator, introduce yourself and ask to schedule a meeting
2. If uncomfortable starting with a call, send the introduction letter first and then call one week later to follow up and schedule a meeting
3. **\*Let NKFI staff know when and where your meeting is scheduled\***

## At the meeting:

1. Thank the legislator for their time
2. Introduce yourself and the *Gift of Life* Advocates
3. Explain why the group was formed and give him/her a brochure
4. Ask about his/her committees and interests
5. Tell him/her about your connection to transplantation
6. Let him/her know that the group is there as a resource
7. Thank him/her for the meeting

## Post-Meeting Steps:

1. Send the follow up thank you note
2. Complete and send in the Report Back form to the NKFI



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## **Your Story**

Take 5 minutes to compose an outline for a meeting including how you would present your story to a legislator.



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# Role Playing

Find a partner and practice your quick intro, story and ask as if the other person were the legislator you will meet with.



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## Share with the Group

Are there any groups of two willing to role play in front of the larger group as an example?



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# Other Situations That May Come Up

- Legislator is already running 15 minutes late, steps out of his/her office and has been called away. Will you walk and talk? Things a player in this role would say:  
Thank them for squeezing you in
  - Get to the point of your visit (remember time is short)
  - Legislator is feeling rushed right now. What can you do to still be memorable?
- Legislator's committee hearing is running long and won't be able to make the meeting. Instead you'll be meeting with the Representative's Legislative Assistant. What are positive suggestions for how you could handle this if you had your heart set on meeting the member?
  - Suggest to reschedule: "I'd really love to meet Rep. Smith, so I can come back if another time is available. Otherwise, I'd be happy to meet with you."
  - Continue with planned meeting and address all items as you would with the legislator and send a follow-up letter or phone call.
  - Leave on a positive note
- Things avoid:
  - Express frustration or disappointment about the change



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# Tips for Communicating

- **Be Cautious of Political Commentary**
  - Be wary of making comments about the “other” party or other specific legislators
  - While it’s a very divided and partisan Congress/ State Government, it’s still a closely-knit and unique community
  - Even if a legislator might agree with your commentary about how another legislator has behaved, avoid the awkward situation where they might feel compelled to defend the person or the institution
- **You are a Representative of Your Organization**
  - This is the opportunity to reinforce the issues of the day facing the organization – and a unified voice on that front will undoubtedly be more successful



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# Tips continued...

- **Avoid Conversations About \$ and Campaign Support**

- It's a skittish political world right now regarding financial support and any interpretation of a *quid pro quo* with regard to financial support and political support will be taken negatively

- **Meet their Staff**

- Legislators attending social events are in great demand. Everyone would like to shake their hand or talk for a few minutes. By nature your interactions with them might be very brief.
- To further foster the relationship-development opportunity, seek out any legislative staff who might have attended with their boss. You'll likely get more face time and a connection with another individual in a position to be aware of your interests



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# Tips continued...

- **Know Interesting Facts About Them**

- Those who know background about the attending legislators always leave the best impression – know something about their position and about them.
- What committees do they serve and what interesting issues does that committee face?
- Even more impressive, however, is the attendee who knows what makes that member tick. What is their primary goal in being an elected official? Economic development in their district? A former physician who wanted to have an impact on the health care debate?
- Knowing such information situates you as a savvy and knowledgeable conversationalist.

- **Show Interest in Them**

- Legislators are always confronted with requests (for positions, help, support), questions, and evaluation/judgment
- Leveraging the unique knowledge about the attending legislator by asking questions about them not about what they can do for you gets legislators engaged
- “What’s the biggest challenge facing your district?”
- “What do you think is the most important priority facing the Congress/State government before the end of the session?”
- You may know the answer already and you may not but, either way, it gets the legislator talking about something that is of importance to him or her and you gather additional intelligence for how to frame your future “asks” to that legislator



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Now what?

Call your legislator to schedule a meeting. For additional information, visit...

[www.illinois.gov](http://www.illinois.gov)



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Please fill out your training survey. Questions and comments can be directed to:

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