



ONTARIO BUDGET LOBBY TOOLS

Why Lobby?

One effective action that every CUPE member can take is to meet with their MPP and express their views – in person. Individual voters hold a great deal of power and many individuals can affect change. This is particularly important given the need to express concern about the budget and demand amendments. MPPs are directed by their constituents and are accountable to them, so let's tell them what we want and need!

When an MPP is contacted about an issue by many constituents, here is what happens:

- MPPs take the issue back to the party caucus for discussion and action
- MPPs may raise the issue in the House and put it on the public record as a matter of concern, or move an amendment to the budget
- Pressure is put on the party and the government to make changes

Remember ... you are the expert

Many people believe that politicians know more than we do or they wouldn't be in decision-making positions. We think we aren't articulate enough or that we'll freeze when we approach the politicians. Maybe they'll ask questions we can't answer. Remember that it is us – the voters – who hold the power.

As workers, and as residents in your area, you have direct, firsthand experience that goes beyond the understanding of most politicians. Experienced lobbyists will tell you that once you start meeting politicians, you'll see that they are just like everyone else. They are ordinary people who come from a variety of backgrounds.

Setting Up the Lobbying Team

CUPE Ontario will organize a teleconference for all participants to call in and be briefed on the message, and learn tips and tools for the MPP meeting.

Meet at least 30 minutes in advance of the MPP meeting. Make sure the team decides:

- (i) who will be the chief spokesperson;
- (ii) who will ask each of the questions, and
- (iii) who will be taking notes. The note-taker is responsible for filling out the sheet to record any comments made by the MPP or their staff members.

Once the lobby sheet is completed, please return it.

RETURN YOUR LOBBY SHEET TO MAUREEN GIULIANI AT CUPE ONTARIO:

Scan and email it to: mgiuliani@cupe.on.ca or fax to: 416-299-3480



POINTERS FOR THE LOBBY MEETING

- ✓ **KNOW THE SUBJECT:** The best way to deal with talking to a politician is to speak from your experience. Stick to what you know about your community and your needs.
- ✓ **SPEAK THE TRUTH:** Don't state what you don't know. You don't need to be an expert or an economist. Offer to follow up if you are asked a question you cannot answer, but do stick to the main message: this budget will not work for you!
- ✓ **STAY FOCUSED:** Try to keep control of the meeting. Don't get sidetracked, and stick to the issue at hand. If the MPP starts talking about something else, shift the conversation back to your main point. Be sure to have someone watch the clock so you get through all of your points.
- ✓ **TAKE NOTES:** It is absolutely acceptable to read from notes and to take notes in the meeting. No matter how informal or personal it feels, it is a formal meeting, so record everything the politician states. Know what you are going to say and exactly what you want from the politician before you go into the meeting.
- ✓ **MAKE THE ASK:** Get a commitment about next steps or actions from the politician at the end of the meeting.
- ✓ **DON'T BE DISCOURAGED:** Not every MPP will be sympathetic or supportive. Don't allow an early shut down or hostile question to stop you from continuing to lobby.