

Lobbying Basics

A brief overview for PRCs

Questions regarding these guidelines can be directed to
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There are two types of lobbying:

Grassroots Lobbying

- This is when you ask the public to talk to legislators.
- You could also call this 'indirect' lobbying.

What is Grassroots Lobbying?

- Definition: Any attempt to influence a vote of an elected official (such as legislator, governor or a state board) by attempting to affect the opinions of the public and asking the public to contact their elected representatives about that legislation.
- **Does not** include activities when there is no legislation or when there is no request that the public contact their elected representatives.

Grassroots Lobbying Examples

- Sending a letter to supporters explaining a current bill and asking them to contact their legislators.
- Speaking at a rally/event where you discuss your position on a bill and ask people to contact their legislators.

What is Direct Lobbying?

- Any attempt to influence legislation through communication with any member or employee of a legislative body or with any other government official **involved in the legislative process.**
- Also includes communications to voters in support of or opposition to ballot initiatives or other measures voted on by the public.

Direct Lobbying Examples

- Meeting with a legislator or legislative staffer to argue for or against a current bill.
- Sending a letter to supporters asking them to vote for a ballot measure.

- Sending a letter/e-mail to legislators to ask for their support of or opposition to a current bill.

More on ballot initiatives

- For all lobbying on ballot issues, please talk to an attorney, as each state has different regulations and reporting requirements.

Candidate Mentions

- There are general blackout periods when federal candidates cannot be mentioned in paid radio ads without filing reports within 24 hours.
- States MAY have similar blackout laws. These are often more restrictive than the federal regulations, so contact your attorney before becoming involved.

Nonprofits Cannot:

- Endorse Candidates
- Coordinate Campaigns with Candidates or Political Parties

Questions to ask your Nonprofit Attorney

- Is your organization structured to do lobbying?
- How much money can you spend on lobbying? (this is based on your overall budget)
- How should your organization report and track any lobbying and candidate-mention activities?

Important Note

- This presentation is meant only to show you where it is important to contact an attorney and should not be construed as legal advice.
- If you need help finding an attorney, contact the Alliance Defense Fund at 1-800-TELL-ADF.

Editor's Note: Here is a downloadable PDF that you might give your pastor to explain:

[Guidelines for Political Activities by Churches and Pastors](#)

