***Making Your Case with Decision Makers***

***General Advice:***

* Maintain an ongoing relationship
* Be visible! -- show up where you think local officials might be
* Invite them to your library
  + Events
  + Media opportunities
* Use your contacts
* Meet with newly elected officials and appointees as soon as possible
* Make sure they know about your successes
* Send a gift when appropriate
* Make it clear that you share their commitment to the issues

***Do’s***

* Be on time for your appointment with an official; even better, arrive early!
* Have a business card handy and present it at the beginning of the meeting.
* Use proper titles, even if you know the official personally.
* Prioritize what you want to say, in case your time with the official is limited.
* Provide a one-page briefing sheet with a clear statement of the action you are seeking, and key facts. Include contact information for additional information.
* Remain calm and focused.
* Know your issues thoroughly, and practice talking about them if necessary.
* Be prepared to make your case in any kind of situation—a hallway, the elevator, an outer office. Practice your elevator speech in advance!
* Tell your story—use specific examples from the official’s district/ward/neighborhood to make your case.
* Tailor your remarks to include the official’s particular expertise or interest.
* Thank the official for taking time to meet with you.
* If appropriate, follow-up with a thank-you note mentioning the major issues.
* Never miss an opportunity to greet and talk with officials, even on an informal basis at community events.
* Concentrate your energies on officials that represent your ward, hometown, district or state.
* Watch your time and when the official makes it clear the meeting is over, leave graciously.

***Don’ts***

* Don’t be concerned if you don’t know the answer to a question, and get back to the official promptly with the requested information.
* Don’t digress from the issues at hand.
* If the official disagrees with you, don’t take a confrontational position. Make your case as well as you can, and end the meeting on a positive note whenever possible.