Tips for Lobbying Your Lawmakers

■ **Pick up the phone.** Call the office of your elected official. Say you are a concerned constituent – plus a member of any relevant local groups, such as the CFI in your area – and that you would like to schedule a meeting with his or her office regarding the issue in question (general introductions, concerns on a bill, etc.).

■ **Include others.** It helps to present a broader, unified front -- especially if you can find people representing different backgrounds. Consider inviting 2-3 others to join you (just make sure to inform the office they’re coming, too).

■ **Prepare.** Research the official’s voting record, proposed bills, and even personal details such as schooling, family, and interests.

■ **Make a folder.** You want to leave something behind for the aide to read. Include some printouts, a flyer, your business card, etc.

■ **Arrive early.** Aides have tight schedules. Show up at least 5-10 minutes early. Use the spare time to go over the points you want to make.

■ **Take the floor.** Be friendly and polite, introduce yourself, the organizations with which you volunteer or work, and then take 5-10 minutes to explain why you wanted to have the meeting (i.e., share your views and concerns on X issues).

■ **Close with a pitch.** Make a realistic and pragmatic request: from considering your views at the next vote, to speaking out on an issue, or proposing a bill.
Stay calm! The legislative aide will have questions. Be prepared, remain patient and polite, and stick to your points. This is not a debate: you want to form a positive relationship with this office.

Admit when you don't know something. Just say you will follow up, don’t make up answers to questions that might stump you.

Keep in touch. Ask for a business card when you leave and follow up in 1-2 days. Don’t be a stranger! But also, don't be a pest.