

How To Advocate to Legislators & Leaders



Created by: Jana Baker

Spring 2021

WHAT IS LOBBYING?

- **lob·by**

/'läbē/Submit

Verb

seek to influence (a politician or public official) on an issue.

"it is recommending that booksellers lobby their representatives"

synonyms: seek to influence, try to persuade, bring pressure to bear on, importune, persuade,

Influence, sway; petition, solicit, appeal to, call on, urge, press, pressure, pressurize, push

TYPES OF LOBBYING

In Person:

A form of advocacy where an individual or group of individuals meet with elected officials with the intention of influencing decisions made by the government.

(2021 introduces a *new* form: lobby via Zoom, from wherever you choose!)

In District:

Reaching out through the Legislator's office in their district. When the Legislature is not in session this can provide a direct place to contact them. This allows for consistent pressure.

In Capitol:

This is a great option during the Legislative session; mostly Monday – Thursday. This may be a one-on-one meeting or testifying at a committee hearing.

TYPES OF LOBBYING (cont.)

Phone Banking:

A useful outreach strategy where a group of individuals either call legislators or voters to persuade political outcomes, collect voter data, or get out the vote.

Postcard Campaign:

Efficient and cost-effective way to get your message in front of legislators by sending postcards.

WHY IS LOBBYING IMPORTANT?

- It allows your voice to be heard
- It helps legislators and decision makers prioritize the concerns of the public
- Individual voices make issues “real”
- Group voices (phone bank calls, letters, postcards) provides power in numbers; volume influences how legislators think about their vote.
- Continued student presence: legislators may ask your opinion before action is taken

WHO TO MEET WITH

- Who makes decisions on the issue - is it a local, state, or federal issue?
- Who are your elected representatives at that level?
- Who is the bill sponsored by?
 - *Who is against the bill?*
- Who is on the committee that will hear the bill?
- Are you a constituent (voter) in their district?

FINDING YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

1. Open the Oregon Legislative Information System (OLIS) - <https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/>
2. Click on “Find Your Legislator”; put in your full address
3. Find your House and Senate member and their contact info
4. Use provided contact information to either call or email their office.
 - Email is a good way to request a meeting as you can clearly prepare your thoughts and make sure you don’t forget any important details.
 - You can also use OLIS to see who sits on each committee and who’s sponsoring each bill.



Today's Events at the Capitol

Scheduled Events For 2/12/2019

Floor Sessions Committees Building Activities

Time:	Event:	Location:
8:00 AM	Art of the Time Art of the People Art Exhibit	Exhibit Building Wide
8:00 AM	House Committee On Natural Resources	HR E
8:00 AM	Oregon Library Day Display	Galleria West
8:00 AM	Oregon Rock and Mineral Exhibit	Rock Case Display
8:00 AM	Oregonians Making a Difference Exhibit	Galleria East
8:00 AM	Senate Committee On Business and General Government	HR B
8:00 AM	Senate Committee On Workforce	HR D
8:00 AM	We are Oregonians - Our Shared Heritage Exhibit	Exhibit Case East_West
8:15 AM	Senate Committee On Judiciary	HR C
8:30 AM	House Committee On Revenue	HR A
8:30 AM	Joint Subcommittee On Education	H-170
8:30 AM	Joint Subcommittee On Human Services	HR F
11:00 AM	Senate Convenes	Senate Chamber
		HR D

- OLIS**
Bills, Votes & Committees
- News**
Press Releases & News
- Find Bills**
Learn How to Find a Bill
- Video**
Watch Capitol Meetings
- Calendar**
View Important Dates
- Visit**
Visit Your State Capitol

Search Oregon Revised Statutes >

Search Bills

Find Your District and Legislators >

Enter your complete address to learn who represents you.

** Requires full address, city, state, and zip code*



Oregon State Legislature

Who Represents Me in Oregon?

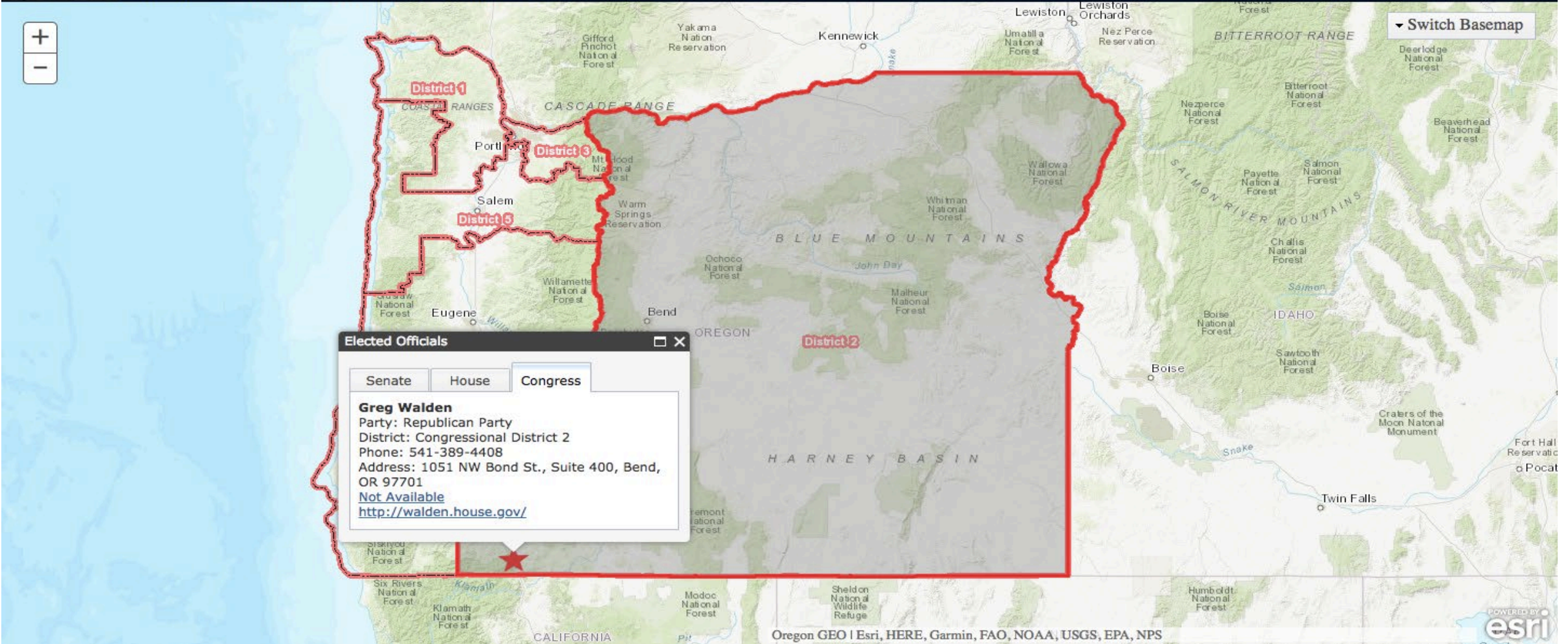
U.S. Senators for Oregon are:

Senator Jeff Merkley, 313 Hart Senate Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20510 | 202-224-3753
Senator Ron Wyden, 221 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg., Washington, D.C., 20510 | 202-224-5244
Further questions about who represents you? Contact your county Elections Office.

Enter Your Address

Requires address, city, state, and zip code

Find Who Represents Me



LEGISLATIVE REFRESHER

Senator

A senator's job is to represent the people living in his or her state in the United States Senate. Part of this job is to write and **vote** on new **laws** called “bills.”

Congress

The **primary** function of **Congress** is to pass rules that all Americans must obey, a function called lawmaking. **Congress** deals in a huge range of matters, from regulating television to passing a federal budget to voting on gun control.

House

The **House of Representatives** shares equal responsibility for lawmaking with the U.S. Senate. As conceived by the framers of the Constitution, the **House** was to represent the popular will, and its members were to be directly elected by the people.

DO YOUR **RESEARCH**

Do this legislator support or oppose your issue?

- Are they a co-sponsor for the bill

How did they vote on similar issues?

- [Votesmart.org](https://www.votesmart.org) is a good resource for this

Know their background information

- Party affiliation
- Demographics of their district
- Are they up for re-election

CONTACTING YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

Contact information is listed on OLIS

Methods of contacting

- Email
- Letter
- Phone call

Email is an effective way to request a meeting so you can clearly prepare your thoughts ensuring all details are included

Always use title (Senator Smith, Representative Jones) and maintain a respectful, positive tone.

RUNNING A MEETING

For multiple constituents meeting as a group with one or more legislators:

Facilitator:

- Greeting: Introduce staff or elected official to lobby group
- Facilitate conversation
- State issues
- Refer to storyteller to tell story
- Present asks
- Keeps track of time
- Thank elected official for their time and/or wish them a great day.

Notetaker:

- Record responses of elected official

Storytellers:

- Introduce yourself as a constituent
- Share story of self

3 COMPONENTS OF **EFFECTIVE** LOBBYING

Include these three in every lobbying meeting!

- 1. Purpose / Issue**
- 2. Story**
- 3. Ask (Specific)**

Ex. Lobbying Outline:

1. State funding for higher education is not consistent and rising costs of tuition is affecting students across the state
2. Your Challenge, Choice, Outcome
3. Support 900M for the Public University Support Fund

TIPS FOR AN **EFFECTIVE** MEETING

- **DO:**

- PRACTICE!
- Research the legislator - know how to create personal connection with them
- Show up early for your meeting
- Make it relevant to them, for example tell them how many students live in their district
- Have key points/facts ready
- Redirect the conversation if it goes off track.
- Have a specific ask!
- Thank them for their time

- **DON'T:**

- Show up late
- Read a script
 - (Notes are fine, but you want to make eye contact and feel like you're having a genuine conversation)
- Get off topic
 - (Your meeting is very short!)
- Make up facts
 - If you don't know, note the question and tell them you'll get back to them
- Argue – instead, identify common ground and work from there
- Forget your ask!

STORIES AS A TOOL

People + Resources + Shared Values = POWER

- People (high volume of students)
- Resources (Access to funding)
- Shared Values (Equity, Education, Quality of life, etc.)

Stories connect issues to lived experiences. When we hear stories that make us feel a certain way, those emotional reactions remind us of our values which can lead to ACTION.

Good stories turn *stagnation* into *motivation*, *inertia* into *urgency*, *apathy* into *anger*, *fear* into *hope*, *isolation* into *solidarity*.

CREATING YOUR **STORY**

In one-on-one legislator meetings you will: explore interests (shared values), exchange ideas (resources) and commit to how we will work together (power and people).

This creates a *public narrative*. **3 Components of a Public Narrative:**

- **Story of Self**
- **Story of us** (What ties us together, what are our shared interests and values?)
- **Now** (What calls us to take action, what are we going to do?)

How We Can Use Stories:

- To humanize an issue
- To get people to support (with time, money) a cause
- To earn a legislator's vote in favor or against a bill

Stories help us make choices in the face of uncertainty - so you can see why having one on one conversations with legislators to *tell our stories* matter.

CREATING YOUR **STORY** (CONT)

WHAT IS YOUR

- **Challenge** – the barriers you've faced in accessing higher education
- **Choice** – how you dealt with those barriers
- **Outcome** – what will happen if... OR, how you are succeeding thanks to..., and *what you will do with success*

CREATING YOUR **STORY** (CONT)

- **Good stories have a structure: challenge, choice, outcome**
- **Ex. 1. Challenge:** I am a parent who works full time and goes to school part time. My daughter has significant healthcare needs so I am struggling with debt. Financial aid doesn't cover our living costs or tuition. **Choice:** I am taking out \$30,000 in debt to finish my degree, which will take me about four years to complete. **Outcome:** If tuition goes up, by \$8 per credit, that's an additional \$400 a year. I can't afford that and will likely have to drop out. Because of tuition rising so quickly, I fear I'll be stuck with debt and no degree. With a degree, I will be able to advance professionally and provide for my daughter.
- **Ex. 2. Challenge:** I am a student who works full time, but cannot afford to pay the high costs of living such as rent and cost of food, matched with my tuition. I am struggling with debt and cannot find a room cheap enough to rent. **Choice:** I used the remainder of my financial aid to pay off interests on loans and credit cards and decided to continue going to school. **Outcome:** I do not have a place to live now and if tuition goes up by 17%, I will likely have to drop out. I fear that I will end up house-less with no degree.

CREATING YOUR **STORY** (CONT)

- **Ex. 3. Challenge:** I am a full time student, an athlete, and a part time worker. I chose to go to school to make my family proud; neither of my parents went to college. I barely make enough money to pay for my bills. I rent a room for \$500/month and I use food stamps to buy groceries each month. I am struggling with my grades and need to use extra time to study in the library with tutors on campus. **Choice:** Because tuition keeps increasing, I have stopped purchasing textbooks for classes and it's hurting my grades. **Outcome:** I do not have access to credit or money to borrow from family to pay for textbooks and I am afraid I will end up losing my scholarship. I want to get to graduation, and be able to give back to my community as a (teacher, or...).

When using personal stories to lobby legislators to support more funding for higher education, the outcome usually has to do with what will happen to you and your peers if tuition were to dramatically increase. This is because tuition costs are tied to how much funding universities receive from the state legislature.

CREATING YOUR STORY (CONT)

- Do:

- Use an experience that can be explained well
- Be vivid and specific
- Tell the story, don't tell *about* the story
- Allow yourself to be vulnerable, but make sure you have processed such experiences before releasing to the public. Just remember that vulnerability builds opportunity for leadership
- Be concise and clear
- Stick to a structure (Challenge, Choice, Outcome)
- Keep your story under three minutes

- Don't:

- Tell your whole life
- Be abstract
- Forget the challenge - a story with no challenge will have no emotion which results in no action
- Forget the outcome - a story that's all challenge and no outcome is a vent session
- Tell someone else's story

CREATING YOUR **STORY** (CONT)

Challenges you may have had to overcome

- Not purchasing textbooks due to high costs.
- Taking out high amounts of student loans to continue their education, this is resulting in low credit scores and inability to save/purchase a home or even pay rent.
- Living with parents for prolonged amounts of time due to tuition costs and student loan debt.
- Housing/food insecurity
- Dropping out of college before earning a degree due to debt and financial burden

CREATING YOUR **STORY** (CONT)

- What are the experiences in your life that have shaped your values and led you to this work?
- When did you first care about being heard?
- When did you first feel like you had to act and why?
- Were there specific sensory experiences connected to those memories and experiences for you? Where were you?

Now develop your own story based around tuition rising.

Challenge, Choice, Outcome