

How to Effectively Lobby For Or Against Legislation Affecting Exotic and Small Animal Pets

These tips offer compelling lobbying strategies for legislation affecting exotic and small animal pets.

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In most states, January marks the beginning of the legislative session, and state legislators throughout the United States slowly make their way to their respective state capitols to begin a long four to six months of stress, committee meetings and headaches.

The most important lobbyist isn't the expensive lawyer, it's the everyday citizen who fights for the causes they believe in.

Most state legislatures convene around the fourth week of January, and possible legislation topics flow in from constituents, businesses, special interest groups and other government entities. And so begins the main lobbying season.

What Do Lobbyists Do?

Lobbyists are, by definition, individuals who meet with elected officials and try to influence them in favor of a specific cause or effort, generally pertaining to their client. Usually, lobbyists are lawyers or professionals by trade who are paid by a specific organization to represent its interests.

However, anyone can be a lobbyist. Any person concerned about an issue, such as exotic and small animal pet ownership, has the right to make his or her beliefs known to their elected officials. To find the specific requirements to lobby, simply contact your state legislator's office.

To Find out more about the legislative process, [click here](#).

How To Be An Effective Lobbyist

If you wish to actively oppose or support legislation affecting exotic pet ownership in your state, make your case quickly and effectively. First, find the House bill and the Senate bill numbers for the proposed legislation. These are found on your state legislature website by searching under bill titles or indexes. You can also call your representative's office and request the information.

Once you have the bill number, print copies of both the house and senate bills to make sure they are beginning the process as exact copies. The website or office staff should be able to tell you where the bill is in the legislative process.

Now, read the bill and make sure you understand its contents and what it seeks to accomplish. After reading, ask yourself these questions: Does the bill accomplish what you think it should? Which parts of the bill are good and which parts are bad? How will it affect you and other members of your small animal community?

Once you understand the legislation and what it means to exotic pet ownership, meet with other people who have the same feelings you have and compose a plan to fight either for or against the bill. Make sure everyone is on the same page with the issues at stake. Start a petition, a phone and letter campaign or ask for outside assistance. Contact your local newspaper and/or media stations and ask them to do a story on how the proposed legislation negatively or positively affects you.

Petition and Letter Campaign

As a group, you and your supporters must write down your thoughts on why this legislation is good or bad. Always make it clear, concise and easily understood. Most state legislators have more than 3,000 bills per session to debate and discuss, so their mail is usually read by staff members who put your information into files either for or against. Have everyone you know who is concerned about exotic pet ownership legibly sign the petition. If your information does not make sense, is inaccurate or disrespectful, the petition and individual letters may not be taken seriously.