

League of Women Voters of New Mexico Lobbying Workshop December 1, 2012

Notes by Connie Bell, Member, League of Women Voters of Santa Fe County

Moderator: Meredith Machen, LWVNM Leader, Voter Services and Education Chair

Basic Rules: Dick Mason, LWVNM Leader, Action Chair

If you are going to speak on behalf of an organization (paid or unpaid), you should be registered as a lobbyist and you should have authorization from that organization. Both forms and the Lobbyist Regulation Act are available on the Secretary of State website. Registration is free for those representing non-profit organizations.

http://www.sos.state.nm.us/Lobbyist_Information/Lobbyist_Forms.aspx

Everyone is strongly encouraged to read The Lobbyist Regulation Act.

Senator Peter Wirth, Senate District 25 Santa Fe, Judiciary Committee Vice-Chair, Rules Committee Member

Top Ten Rules of Lobbying:

10. Don't be afraid of the Roundhouse. Go sometime when the legislature is not in session to look around and familiarize yourself with it.
9. Understand what it takes for a bill to become a law. Very few bills make it through the whole process.
8. Use the tools on **the NM Legislature's great website** - <http://www.nmlegis.gov>
You can read bills, do research by topic, track your bills, and listen to many committee hearings and the "Floor Sessions" of the Senate and House.
7. Know the best way to communicate with YOUR legislators. Sen. Wirth tries to respond to every e-mail. If he doesn't, e-mail him again, and he will respond. He doesn't get very many telephone calls. Other legislators may prefer phone calls.
6. You are most effective lobbying your own legislator. Legislators are most responsive to their own constituents, so if you need to lobby someone that isn't your legislator, take one of his or her constituents with you!
5. Be courteous and remember your bill is one of hundreds legislators have to consider.
4. Bills usually take more than one to legislative session to pass.
3. Anyone can walk down onto the "Floor" before or after sessions. If you can't find your legislator in his/her office, you can talk to him/her on the floor! Wirth loves it when you do that, as it helps keep the lobbyists at bay!
2. Speak up at committee hearings!
1. Count your votes and be strategic in how you advocate for/against bills. Bills are assigned to two or more committees. To get a bill through a committee, know who is for it and then focus your energies on getting those who are not for it to pass it. Lobby members on the first committee,

then lobby those on the second. Don't lobby non-committee members until your bill is out of committee and going to the Floor.

Representative Jimmie Hall, House District 28, Bernalillo County, House Education Committee and Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee

The job of every Senator and Representative is to do the best for the STATE OF NEW MEXICO, not just to represent their constituents.

NUMBER ONE rule for lobbying: Know who your State Senator and State Representative are!

Respect the votes of legislators and their right to vote their conscience.

Get your legislators' e-mail addresses and cell phones.

Two very important results of the General Election:

1. For the first time, NM has more urban than rural legislators. AZ turned a couple of years ago, Colorado more recently.
2. There will be completely new leadership. The House has voted Craig Brandt, Nate Gentry, Alonzo Baldonado into the top positions. The Senate will be voting soon on its leadership. The only returning leader is Sen. Michael Sanchez (Valencia County).

Education is approximately ½ of the state budget. Hall has worked with on bipartisan legislation with Rep Mimi Stewart to implement and expand funding for Pre-K and K-3 Plus. Funding has gone from \$3 million to \$6 million, and he hopes to double or triple that. He also wants to increase funding for teacher training. Some legislators and officials like to talk about other states' plans, but he believes in our NEW MEXICO plan.

NM is unique because of three provisions in the Constitution

1. The anti-donation clause (the state cannot donate anything to a private entity).
2. NM has been committed to provide a "sufficient education" since statehood
3. Balanced budget requirement, meaning we cannot spend more than we have.

Attend Interim Committee meetings/hearings if you can. Committee-endorsed legislation comes out of these. The Education Committee also meets for a week before the session begins.

Don't take anything for granted – "bird-dog" your bill(s).

Legislators can pre-file legislation between December 15 and January 15 and get bill numbers in the first days of the session. It's a significant advantage to pre-file legislation in the House because it takes bills in order by bill number. A bill with a lower number is more likely to get through the whole process. The process includes getting through the committees, getting passed on the Floor, getting passed by the Senate, and to the Governor's desk for signature.

If you have a Santa Fe issue that you are passionate about, you need to look at how that legislation will impact districts represented by other committee members.

Know your opposition and their positions better than they know them. Hall will listen to your position for or against a bill, then ask you why he should vote the opposite way.

Be there. If something's happening at 2:15 a.m., be on time even though some committees do not run on time. If you are not there when the bill is heard, you have missed your chance.

Linda Siegle (registered lobbyist in NM since 1992, specializing in representing non-profits, schools, and health care associations)

One definition of a "lobbyist" is "The person you hire to protect you from the people you elect."

First, pick a sponsor who cares about the issue/knowledge. If it's a money bill, find a legislator who is on House Appropriations or Senate Finance. Be careful of personality conflicts, though – you don't want your bill carried by a committee member that the chair dislikes!

You can draft a bill or use a model bill from another state, but only a legislator can sponsor a bill.

New Mexico Legislative Council Service - non-partisan legislative service agency. Legislative Council Service staff is responsible for handling all bill drafting requests that come from members of the Legislature.

Legislative Council Service also provides staff for Interim Committees, which meet from May to December. There are standing members and advisory (nonvoting) members on Interim Committees and the meetings are held around the state as budget allows.

Standard practice now is to introduce a bill in one house and then ask someone from the other house to "sign on." In the past, identical or similar bills would come up in both houses.

Don't expect a bill to pass the first year. Siegle worked on the NM Human Rights Act, which took 13 years to pass!

Don't wait until Day 29 of 60 to introduce a bill. It will probably be too late to get through.

After key witnesses speak at committee hearings, it is time for public comment. Often the committee chair will ask how many in the room are for and against a bill. Be prepared to identify yourself and speak. Be concise and get your point out there!

The House hears bills in order. In the Senate, your bill can be #3 one day and #54 the next. In the House, the speaker assigns bills to committees; in the Senate, there's a more structured process.

If a bill from one body is amended by the other, the original body may ask the second to "recede" any amendments they don't like. If amendments by the second are OK, there will be a "conference" to finalize the wording.

Once a bill passes both the Senate and the House, it goes to the Governor. If it gets to her before the last three days, she has three days to sign it or veto it. If it gets to her in those last three days, she has twenty days. So you want to get your bill on her desk for signature BEFORE the last three days.

Questions

Schedules and agendas are posted on www.nmlegis.gov. The Legislative switchboard number is 1-505 986-4300. You can call to speak to your Representative or Senator or find out from the legislative aide of a committee chair whether a bill on an agenda is still scheduled to be heard that day and how the committee is doing on the schedule.

Pick up the 2013 Legislative Almanac (not available yet). The Governor's switchboard is 505-467-2200.

Hall does NOT like memorials. There used to be a lot of "memorials" instructing agencies to "study this and that," but those are becoming less common. He will sponsor one type – the "X" Day Memorial. The rest are just feel-good recognition and a waste a lot of time. Wirth agrees, although he mentioned a worthy one from last year – HM4 (Mimi Stewart)

“EXPRESSING OPPOSITION TO THE UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT RULING IN CITIZENS UNITED V. FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION.”

Hall: Sources of Model Legislation:

- ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council) - Conservative
- CSG (Council of State Governments) or CSG West, which understands issues facing the Western states, such as mining, problems of distance, and water
- NCSL (**National Conference of State Legislatures**)-**Objective**
 - *Ed. Note. See also SLLF (state Legislative Leaders Foundation)..Further info on all @ <http://truth-out.org/news/item/9033-subverting-the-statehouse-uncovering-the-other-alecs>*

Wirth: Bring your model or draft legislation, but know that you'll be meeting with LCS staff (w/ or w/o your Senator or Representative) to draft the actual bill, and it WILL change. NM is unique.

Hall: Look at the analysis of similar bills in previous years. That will give you the supporters and opponents. Very important!

Committee Assignments:

- House – Members indicate up to five of their committee interests. The Speaker then assigns members to committees, with input from Minority and Majority Leaders and committee chairs, who also play a major role.
- Senate Pro Tem assigns committees. The Senate is not quite as partisan as the House, and the Senate Minority Leader really has a say.

Other:

<http://www.lwvnm.org/> The League of Women Voters of New Mexico has begun planning for the 2013 sixty-day Legislative Session. If you are a League member, you can sign up to be on the LWV Action email distribution list and Action phone calls. See [Action page](#) for the latest details. . **League Day League Day at the Legislature - Tuesday, February 5, 2013** at Garrett's Desert Inn.

Know Your Elected Officials - 2013 Voters Key Coming Soon! The League is updating its free guide to the state's elected officials based on results of the 2012 General Election. The "Voters Key" has contact information for legislators and will be available in print and online before the Legislature convenes in January 2013.