



INDIANA FRIENDS

Guide to
Quaker

LOBBYING

THE TRADITIONAL TESTIMONIES OF FRIENDS:
TESTIMONIES OF PEACE, SIMPLICITY, EQUALITY,
INTEGRITY, STEWARDSHIP AND EARTH CARE.

COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION

QUAKERIFCL.ORG

BACKGROUND

Advocate for Positive Change

The Indiana General Assembly (IGA) is a part-time legislature and most members have limited staff. Some members of the IGA share the services of their legislative assistants (LA), so do not have the resources to fully research topics that are brought before them.

Many legislators get information from lobbyists representing certain industries or interests from around the state or outside of our state boundaries. In recent years, organizations like American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) and Council of State Governments (CSG) have had an outsized influence on the legislature. The link below has a newspaper investigation of this trend.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/investigations/2019/04/03/alec-american-legislative-exchange-council-model-bills-republican-conservative-devos-gingrich/3162357002/>

By contrast, advocacy organizations like Indiana Friends Committee on Legislation (IFCL) seek to relate our Christian faith and Quaker testimonies to help shape responsible decisions by IGA members. We attempt to translate the concerns of Friends into legislative action by advocating Quaker beliefs in a politically non-partisan way to IGA members, and to encourage dialogue that strives for integrity, consistency, and truth. Through personal visits with members, as well as through testimony before legislative committees, we strive to express our social concerns. Creating a continuing relationship with legislators is one of the most effective ways to advocate for the positive change we desire for all Hoosiers.

01 Before taking action

Become still. Ask God, “Is this where you are leading me?”

- Are my facts accurate?
- Can I speak the truth with love?
- Research the IGA member you are visiting: What is their position on the issue you are lobbying for/against? What is their background (faith, work experience, education, home town, political party, time in office)? What committees do they serve on?
- Identify a prior vote or position you can thank the member for, whether or not it’s related to the issue you are lobbying for/against.
- Are there alternatives or options to suggest? A positive suggestion, reasonably stated, is always preferable to unbridled opposition.
- When possible, schedule a meeting when the IGA is out of session, when you can have time to talk and build a positive relationship. Meetings during session are also possible, but legislators’ time is more limited. You can contact the LA (identified on line) or the legislator’s staff to schedule a meeting. Try to find out how much time you will have for the visit.
- Prepare a paper called a “Leave Behind” with your “ask,” key points in support, and contact information for how to reach you for questions.

02 Meeting with a legislator

Remember that being a citizen lobbyist is a necessary and honorable role in a democracy.

- Remember the Light of God is within the legislator; be positive and calm as you speak.
- Begin with a round of introductions. Explain who you are and your relevant affiliations. Get direct contact information for the legislator and/or their LA or staffer.
- Say “thank you,” both for the opportunity to meet and for a position the member has taken which you support.
- Introduce the “ask.” Tell the legislator what you know about the topic and why it is important to you.
- Share a personal story to illustrate your concern and what it means to your community.
- Take care and speak respectfully. No one likes being antagonized, lectured to, or condescended to, and damaging the relationship will make your efforts ineffective. Find common ground where you can.
- Ask for questions. Ask for and listen to the legislator’s responses to your request.
- Repeat the “ask” and thank the legislator. Give them your “Leave Behind.”
- End with, “What can I do as a citizen to help you?” or “What can I do as a citizen to help you gather information on this issue?”
- Be certain to thank the legislator for their time.
- Convey an intention to follow up. Leave cards or contact information along with the “Leave Behind.”

03 After the meeting

Make sure to follow up with the legislator or their office by email. If you do this the same day or within one business day, you are more likely to be remembered. And this is a second opportunity to make a favorable impression. In your email:

- Thank the legislator for taking the time to meet with you.
- Repeat the “ask” and a few key points in support.
- Provide (such as with a link), or offer to provide, more resources and information.
- Include the names and contact information for everyone in your group with whom the legislator met.

THE INDIANA FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION

has served as a non-partisan Quaker lobbying group since 1972. IFCL attempts to translate the concerns of Friends into legislative action by advocating Quaker beliefs to Indiana legislators and encouraging dialogue that strives for integrity, consistency and truth.

IFCL seeks to express the spirit of Christ and to relate our Christian faith and Quaker testimonies to help shape responsible decisions by our state government.

We strive to express our social concerns through personal visits to and correspondence with Indiana legislators, as well as through testimony before legislative committees. We also believe we can be most effective through empowering individual Quakers and Friends Meetings to share their concerns with legislators.

IFCL is governed by Friends procedure. It is funded by and based solely on the voluntary participation of interested Quakers and other like-minded individuals. Monthly Meetings are encouraged to send representatives to attend IFCL legislation planning sessions. While IFCL speaks for those who are involved in promoting its legislative policies, it does not claim to speak for all Friends.

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FOR MORE INFO
ABOUT IFCL
visit www.quakerifcl.org

OR CONTACT
Mary Blackburn
mary.blackburn4@gmail.com

Phillip Goodchild
Goodch713@aol.com

Diana Hadley
dhadley@franklincollege.edu

