Developing an Effective Message

Answer these five questions to develop a message that is succinct, clear, and compelling.

1. Who are you?
   - Name and address
   - Do you live in the legislator’s district? Are you a constituent?
   - Are you affiliated with an organization? Briefly describe it (regional, state, national, etc.)

2. What issues are you most concerned about?
   - Be prepared to describe your issue and don't be surprised if your legislator is unfamiliar with it.
   - Explain your issue briefly and plainly (no more than two sentences) - don't bombard them initially with the details.

3. Why is this issue important to you?
   - Make a compelling argument from your point of view

4. Why should this issue be important to your legislator?
   - Describe how this issue will affect his/her constituents.
   - Does his/her committee deal with these types of issues?

5. What action would you like the legislator to take?
   - Always have a clear call to action.
   - Always ask for a follow-up or response.
   - Be specific in your request– don’t ask for a “yes” or “no” response. Ask that they help get a bill heard in committee or brought up for a vote.
   - Sometimes the best action is to keep dialogue open. Ask if they would be willing to read supporting materials and receive a follow-up phone call from you.

Additional tips:
   - Try to leave something in writing with the legislator.
   - Ask if the legislator would like more information or what you can do to gain their support.
   - Be sure to follow-up in a timely manner.