

Lobbying for the League of Women Voters Arizona

Barbara Klein, President of LWVAZ, and registered lobbyist, spent many hours of her time at the Arizona Legislature, lobbying on behalf of the members. She was concerned about bills that would impact many of the issues for which we have taken a position. This is a summary of what she wrote in a letter before she moved to Oregon.

Barbara Klein testified often at committee hearings. She made it a point to plan what she would say and bring note. She practiced so that she would be succinct and not speak in a monotone.

Election Reform and Voter Protection were issues she felt most passionate about, and tried to speak out as often as possible when bills concerning these issues were being discussed or voted upon. She was also able to meet in conference committees before the hearings when amendments were being considered.

Barbara Klein met with others who were lobbying the same issues. She believed it was important to start early and know what others are doing. This gave greater support or opposition to many of the bills that were being considered, such as Changes in Clean Election, the modification of PEVL, and changes to the Initiative/Referendum and Recall petitions. She found that many Legislators were polite and respectful to those who came to testify. There was even consideration of Ranked Choice Voting as an option, but was rejected before the final vote.

Barbara included several important suggestions for those who lobby for the League next year:

1. Learn to use ALIS (AZ Legislative Information System) to track the progress of bills.
2. Establish a relationship with your Legislators.
3. When contacting a Legislator, send a hand written note. They stand out.
4. Catch them doing something right and thank them.
5. Don't forget their staff.

She concludes by saying, "Lobbying is more than one thing. It is many. It is writing your legislator, sending emails, sitting in committees to know the faces, testifying when the League has a position, attending the important conference committees when invited, helping to draft a bill, providing background information or a special point of view. It is planning ahead and reaching out. It is NOT rocket science. More than anything else, it is "being there". Any one of us can do these things – or some of them – all we have to do is step out (just a bit) from our comfort shells. Don't be partisan. Don't burn bridges. Don't expect perfection and don't bluster. Smile, keep your facts straight, be a good listener and be a good Leaguer."

Prepared by Marion Pickens
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