

**CALIFORNIA CULTURE CHANGE COALITION**  
*... Promoting Autonomy and Respect in Nursing Homes*

**Tips for CMP Legislation**

1. Find out what the issues are. A critical issue in California was the amount of money in the fund. We researched the issue and were able to show how it had been used in the past.
2. Ensure all Coalition stakeholders are in agreement before moving forward.
3. Know where your power bases are. Ask for their help. We had a new Director of Licensing and Certification – and she was hesitant to use the fund. We used our influence with CMS to help persuade her to remove her opposition. (Find out who can “carry the water.”)
4. Fundamentals of lobbying a bill:
  - Don't assume because you have a good idea, you can get a bill passed – there are many reasons why good ideas fail.
  - Find out who your opposition might be – labor, consumer advocates, the state administration. Meet with them and discuss the proposed legislation. Find out what their objections might be. Draft the bill keeping the opposition's concerns in mind.
  - Be in communication with all stakeholders before you introduce the legislation – send them copies of the legislation and let them suggest amendments they might need to remove their opposition. It's always easier to accommodate opposition when you can rather than duke it out in committee.
  - Choose the right author of the Legislation – try to pick an author from the same party as the Governor. The Governor has to sign the bill.
  - Work with a lobbyist – they know how to get things done. One of your organizations probably has an advocate on staff who knows the legislative process and the legislative staff.
  - Be aware of legislative deadlines and meet all the deadlines. Make sure you visit committee staff well in advance of the date the bill gets heard in committee.
  - Get support from the power bases – find out who is connected to committee chairs and who can run interference in the various

committees and in the Governor's office.

- Make sure you get your letters of support in on time. Meet the deadlines.
- Know when the legislative hearings are scheduled and have someone prepared to testify at all hearings.
- The most fundamental rule of all: Be in the room (or very nearby) when they vote. If someone has a question you want to be sure it is answered.