



# ADVOCATING FOR HOME RULE WORKING WITH LEGISLATORS

The term "Home Rule" does not resonate with all legislators. For some, it is simply a lack of knowledge. For others, it is a lack of interest. And for a select few, our local interests are being overrun by special interests. We cannot let this deter us from our efforts to educate state leaders on Home Rule and the local impact of legislation. That's why we're asking them to trust us. Some legislators were recently local leaders themselves. Let's remind them of the importance of solving local problems with local solutions. Let's encourage them to focus on state issues and leave the local issues to those who know their communities best.

## LOOK FOR WAYS TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS.

Connect with members of your legislative delegation throughout the year and not just during session:

- Do some research and look for personal things you have in common, such as having children/grandchildren or attending the same school.
- Invite them to events hosted by your city or you personally.
- Send them holiday cards.

The more legislators see us and hear from us, the more they will want to support us.

## BE PREPARED WITH LOCAL IMPACT.

To be successful, we must know the issues. How will proposed legislation impact your community? Know how to effectively communicate this information to state lawmakers. Be prepared with real-life data and a personal story to describe the local impact.

## WHAT DO YOU WANT LEGISLATORS TO DO?

Do we want them to vote in a certain way, to lobby a fellow lawmaker or to ask a question during committee? Be specific in what we are asking legislators to do. And make sure to hold them accountable on the campaign trail, during committee weeks and throughout session. Use the League's Key Votes Summary document to understand exactly how each legislator voted on important issues during legislative session. You can find that summary at [flicities.com/advocacy-pages/resources-tools](http://flicities.com/advocacy-pages/resources-tools).

## THANK THEM.

A brief, well-written thank-you note is always appreciated, especially for those who stand up for Home Rule. Even if we disagree with our legislators on an issue, they are more likely to listen if we find a way to praise them. And don't underestimate your interactions with staff. They are often the gatekeepers and can have tremendous sway in ensuring our meeting requests, information and phone calls get shared.

## ACCEPT NO EXCUSES

### "I'M NOT ON THE COMMITTEE."

Our legislator's job is to fight for our districts. They need to advocate for our interests with colleagues who are on the committee tasked with considering your issue. Help arm them with stories and data to help.

### "I HAD TO FOLLOW MY PARTY/ CAUCUS/LEADERSHIP/ETC."

Leadership did not elect our state lawmakers; we, the people in our communities, did! It is their job to fight within their respective party or caucus to support us. No one else is better equipped. Encourage them to join forces with local government champions to pass bills that are good for our neighborhoods and to help block those that are bad.