

Top Ten Quick Advocacy Tips

When library issues arise in public policy debates, every library advocate needs to reach out to their public officials and persuade them to protect our libraries and rights!

1. **Get to know your local public officials BEFORE you need their help.**
2. **Do your homework.** Look to the Illinois Library Association or American Library Association (Office for Intellectual Freedom or Washington Office) for background on the specific issue and how best to frame the message.
3. **Contact public officials personally if possible.** A meeting is better than a phone call, a phone call is better than an e-mail, and an e-mail is better than no contact.
4. **Shrink the message.** Share the most important facts and the few best arguments.
5. **Make it personal.** Explain how the issue impacts you and your institution...and their constituents!
6. **Make a clear request.** Ask them specifically to SUPPORT the legislation, or OPPOSE the legislation, or help to change the legislation.
7. **Be polite, but direct, and try to get a commitment to support the library position.**
8. **Mobilize.** Ask your library leaders, staff, Friends groups, library supporters, civic leaders, and others to also contact their public officials. Form a coalition of liked-minded organizations to support your position.
9. **Use the media, new and traditional.** Draw broader attention to the issue and the library perspective using all channels, for example, letters to the editor, blog comments, list serves, social media, etc.
10. **Don't forget.** After the issue is resolved, make sure to thank those that supported the library, and know that more work needs to be done with those that did not.

Strong Libraries = A Strong Illinois

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