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SmokeLess States National Tobacco Policy Initiative and the following **Coalition partners:**
American Cancer Society – New England Division, American Heart Association – The Northeast
Affiliate, American Lung Association of Maine, City of Portland - Public Health Department,
Consumers for Affordable Health Care, Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Maine Center for Public
Health, Maine Hospital Association, Maine Osteopathic Association, Medical Care Development,
Maine Primary Care Association, Maine Medical Association*

Maine Coalition on Smoking or Health



The Maine Coalition on Smoking or Health (MCSOH), in partnership with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Smokeless States National Tobacco Policy Initiative, presents this State of Maine Advocacy Manual.

This manual is being offered to individuals, communities, and organizations as a training and resource tool for the legislative process in Maine. MCSOH is available to pair this manual with training sessions. This manual is an overall guide to:

- The Legislative Process
- The State House
- State Government on the Web
- Communication with Legislators
- Community Activities
- Working with the Media
- How to Prepare for Elections

Dear Reader:

Please note that this manual is specific to state government in Maine. If you would like support in advocacy on the municipal level please contact the MCSOH staff.

Thank you and enjoy!

Sincerely,

Staff of the Maine Coalition on Smoking or Health

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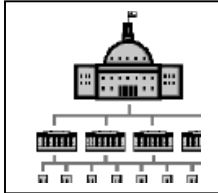
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The Legislative Process

1. How the Legislature is Organized

2. How a Bill Becomes a Law: Maine's Legislative Process

3. What You Should Know about a Legislative Document



1. How the Legislature is Organized

(adapted from the Clerk of the House web site)

House: The Maine House of Representatives has 151 voting members plus non-voting Penobscot and Passamaquoddy tribal representatives. Representatives are elected for two-year terms, with the exception of the Passamaquoddy representative, who serves for four years. All bills for raising revenue must originate in the House of Representatives; otherwise, bills may originate in either the House or Senate. Each House member represents approximately 8,000 constituents.

Senate: The Senate has 35 members. Senators are also elected for two-year terms. Each Senator represents approximately 35,000 constituents.

Legislature: The two-year term of the Legislature consists of two "regular" sessions. The first regular session begins in December after the general election and lasts for about six months. The second regular session begins in January of the second year and lasts three to four months. Additional "special" sessions may be called in certain circumstances.

Committees: The Legislature has 17 joint standing committees consisting of members from the Senate and House. Committees hold public hearings, analyze and evaluate bills and make formal recommendations to the full Legislature. Committees are organized by subject:

- Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
- Appropriations and Financial Affairs
- Business, Research and Economic Development
- Criminal Justice and Public Safety
- Education and Cultural Affairs
- Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
- Insurance and Financial Services
- Health and Human Services
- Judiciary
- Labor
- Legal and Veterans' Affairs
- Marine Resources
- Natural Resources
- State and Local Government
- Taxation
- Transportation
- Utilities and Energy



2. How a Bill Becomes a Law: Maine's Legislative Process

During the first regular session of the Legislature, there are no formal limitations on the type or number of bills that may be submitted prior to the announced filing deadline (historically the third Friday in December). Bills introduced in the second regular session of the Legislature are limited by the Constitution of Maine to budgetary matters, the Governor's legislation, legislation of an emergency nature approved by the Legislative Council, legislation submitted pursuant to authorized studies, and legislation submitted by direct initiative petition of the electorate.

Idea Developed: A legislator decides to introduce/sponsor a bill, sometimes at the suggestion of a constituent, interested group, public official or the Governor. The legislator may ask nine other legislators in either "chamber" (House or Senate) to join as co-sponsors.

Bill Drafted: At the legislator's direction, the Revisor's Office, the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis, and the Office of Fiscal and Program Review provide research and drafting assistance and prepare the bill in proper technical form.

Bill Introduced: The legislator gives the bill to the Clerk of the House or Secretary of the Senate (depending on whether he/she is a member of the House or Senate), where a committee recommendation is made. The bill is placed on the Senate or House calendar, as appropriate, for committee reference.

Committee Reference: The recommendation for which committee will handle the bill must be approved by both the House and Senate. Once that occurs, the bill is given an LD (Legislative Document) number, printed and referred to the assigned committee for consideration.

Committee Action: The committee conducts a public hearing where it accepts testimony on the proposed legislation from any interested party. Notices of public hearings are printed in newspapers with statewide distribution. They are also listed on the Legislature's website. Committee members vote whether to report the bill out to the full Legislature as is, or with one or more amendments. They also vote whether to recommend "ought to pass" or "ought not to pass," with or without amendments. The report may be unanimous or it may be a divided report that reflects disagreement among committee members.

First Reading: In order to be enacted, a bill must pass through four steps in each chamber: first reading, second reading, engrossment and enactment. When the bill, with any committee amendments, is reported out of committee, it goes to the chamber where it originated. There it receives its first vote, and if an "ought to pass" report is accepted in the vote, the bill receives its first "reading."

Second Reading: The next legislative day the bill is placed on the calendar for its second reading, and "floor" amendments may be offered by any member of that chamber. The House has a consent calendar for unanimous "Ought to Pass" or "Unanimous Ought to Pass as Amended" bills which takes

the place of the First and Second Readings. Once a bill passes its second reading, it is sent to be engrossed – that is, reprinted into one document that contains the bill and all adopted amendments. When one chamber has passed the bill to be engrossed, it is sent to the other body for its consideration.

Second Chamber: The bill goes through a similar process. If the second chamber amends the bill, it is returned to the first chamber for a vote on the changes. If the changes are not accepted, the bill may then be sent to a conference committee to work out a compromise agreeable to both chambers.

Enactment: After a bill is engrossed, it must be considered for final passage in each chamber. A bill receives final legislative approval when it passes both chambers in identical form.

Governor: After final passage (enactment) the bill is sent to the Governor. The Governor has ten days in which to sign or veto the bill. If the Governor neither vetoes nor signs the bill and the Legislature is still in session, the bill (after ten days) becomes law as if the Governor signed it. If the Legislature has adjourned for the year the bill does not become law. This is called a “pocket veto”. If the Legislature comes back into special session, the Governor, by the end of the 3rd day, must deliver a veto message to the chamber of origin or the bill becomes a law.

Law: A bill becomes law 90 days after the end of the legislative session in which it was passed. A bill can become law immediately if the Legislature, by a two-thirds vote of each chamber, declares an emergency exists. An emergency law takes effect on the date the Governor signs it unless otherwise specified in its text. If a bill is vetoed, it will become law if the Legislature overrides the veto by a two-thirds vote each chamber.

If a bill that has been enacted by both Houses contains a fiscal note (that is, requires the appropriation of money), before being sent to the Governor for signature it must be considered and approved by the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and legislative leadership. If the bill is approved, it goes back to the Senate for final approval, and then to the Governor.

Also, the process for establishing the State’s biennial budget is not the same as the process for other bills. Please see the Legislator’s Handbook on the State website for a detailed explanation of the budget process.

The State
House and
State
Government
on the Web

1. General



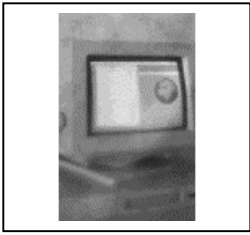
1. General Information found on the State Website
www.maine.gov

The State is constantly improving (or at least rearranging) their web presence. As you search the web for information on Maine you will notice that you may jump from one system to another.

The front page of **www.maine.gov** has two relevant links.

- ❖ First, the Government “tab” has a drop down menu that includes a direct link to the State Legislature. If you click on the State Legislature link, an easy to read menu can guide you to a lot of information.
- ❖ Second, the section entitled “**How do I...?**” has a direct link to find and contact legislators, the governor’s office and our Washington DC delegation.

The Secretary of State’s website (also accessible from Maine.Gov) has good information on Maine’s legislative process for school-aged children.



2. Using the State Website: Viewing and Downloading Legislative Documents

When you know the LD number

1. Start on www.maine.gov
2. Click "Government"
3. Click "State Legislature"
4. Click "Check Legislative Bill Status" (under the "Bills" heading)
5. Enter the LD number you want and hit "enter"
6. View the cover page with the sponsors of the bill and the committee it has been referenced to.
7. Click "Bill Text" in left margin to read the bill
8. To download, click on "Download Bill Text"

When you don't know the LD number

1. Start on www.maine.gov
2. Click "Government"
3. Click "State Legislature"
4. Click "Bills Keyword Search"
5. Enter words that are in the text of the bill and click "Search"

If you have problems downloading or viewing bills call the Office of Legislative Information at 287-1692 they will talk you through the process.



3. Using the State Website: Contacting your Elected Officials *www.Maine.gov*

These pages give you easy links to search for your elected officials by town. Please keep in mind that after the elections, it may take a while for the legislature to update their pages.

Identifying Your Senator

1. Start at the State Homepage: www.maine.gov
2. Click "How Do I..?" "Contact my legislator"
3. Click "State Senator by Town"
5. Click the letter of the town
6. Click the district number to the right of the town name

Locating your Representative

1. Start on the State Homepage: www.maine.gov
2. Click “How Do I.?” contact my legislator
3. Click “State Representative by Town”
4. Click on the first letter of your town

Emailing Your Representative or Senator

Follow steps above for identifying your legislators. Their email addresses show on their homepage. Please keep in mind that legislators often don’t check their state email accounts from home. Use their home email when available.



4. Directions to the State House

From the North

- Take I-95 to Exit 109A onto Western Ave

From the South--Lewiston (Turnpike)

- Take Turnpike through Gardiner toll to Exit 109, then Augusta East onto Western Ave.

From the South – Portland (I 295)

- Take 295 until it merges with 95 at the Gardiner toll. Take Exit 109 toward Augusta East, onto Western Ave.

Once on Western Ave: go to the third set of stoplights and turn right on Armory St. Follow Armory until the first stop light at Sewall Street. The State Office Building and State House will be ahead of you on the right.

To park, take a left onto Sewall Street and park in the free garage on the right. You can also park in the huge lot behind the State Office building. Take a right onto Sewall Street and a left into the lot.

There are a number of spaces reserved for “Legislators Only.” You will be towed from these spots.

To enter the State House, you should enter the State Office Building and take the tunnel to the State House. There are staffed kiosks to help you find your way.



5. Information on Public Hearings

The Public Hearing Schedule Contains:

- LD number of the bill, the title of the bill, and the sponsor of the bill
- The date of the hearing
- The time and location of the hearing

From the Internet:

1. Start on www.maine.gov
2. Click "Government"
3. Click "State Legislature"
4. Click on "Public Hearing Schedule"
5. Scroll down to view the schedule of hearings. Hearing Schedules are posted weekly by 10:00 Friday mornings. Supplements are posted as needed. If you would like to be notified by email of updates to the schedule fill out the form on the Public Hearing website (currently in the left margin of the page).

Print Copy Availability:

Printed copies of the schedule are available through the following venues:

- Outside the Secretary of Senate Office in the State House, Room 327
- Weekend Edition of the Bangor Daily News
- Maine Sunday Telegram
- Lewiston Sunday Sun

Telephone:

Bill status information, including the hearing schedule, is available from the Office of Legislative Information at 287-1692.

Tip: Always confirm the hearing date the day before and again on the day of the hearing.



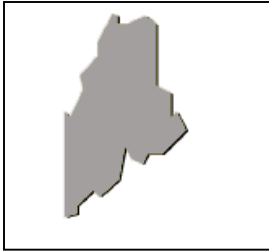
6. State House Etiquette

- Men must wear jackets at all times in the House and Senate chambers. Women must dress appropriately.
- No jeans or sweat suits.
- No sneakers. There are people who wear sneakers in the State House – but the practice is frowned on.
- Cell phones and pagers must be muted in all committee meetings, public hearings and in the House and Senate chambers.
- Please be considerate of people who work at the State House. Do not hold conversations in front of office doors and do not block hallways.
- There is no food or drink (except water) allowed in committee rooms or chambers. Please observe these rules *even if others do not.*
- If you bring anything into the committee rooms – including handouts – take all extras with you.
- When addressing Senators and Representatives in the State House, please use their formal title (ex: Senator Smith or Representative Jones) – even if you know them.

Communication with Legislators



- 1. The Ten Informal Rules of Advocacy**
- 2. Tips for Working with Your Legislator**
- 3. Calling Your Senator or Representative**
- 4. Letter to a Legislator**



1. The Ten Informal Rules of Advocacy

- 1. Consider yourself an information source.** Legislators have limited time, staff and interest in any one issue. They can't be as informed as they might like on all issues—or the ones that concern you. You can fill the information gap.
- 2. Make the legislator aware of any personal connection you may have.** No matter how insignificant you may feel it is, if you have any friends, relatives, and/or other colleagues in common, **MAKE THAT KNOWN.**
- 3. Tell the truth.** There is no faster way to lose your credibility than to give false or misleading information to a legislator.
- 4. Know who is on your side.** It is helpful for a legislator to know what other groups, individuals, state agencies and/or legislators are working with you on an issue.
- 5. Know the opposition.** Anticipate who the opposition will be. Tell the legislator what the opposition arguments are likely to be and provide him/her with answers and rebuttals to those arguments.
- 6. Don't be afraid to admit you don't know something.** If a legislator wants information you don't have or asks something you don't know, acknowledge that and then offer to get the information.
- 7. Be specific about what you are looking for.** If you want a vote, information, answers to a question—whatever it is—make sure you ask for it directly and get an answer.
- 8. Follow up.** It is very important to find out if your legislators did what they said they would do. It is also very important that you thank them or ask for an explanation as to why they did not vote as you would have liked them to.
- 9. Don't burn any bridges.** It is easy to get very emotional over issues you feel strongly about. Be sure that no matter how difficult your conversation might be, you leave on good enough terms that you can go back to that legislator later. Remember that your strongest opponent on one issue may be your strongest ally on another.
- 10. REMEMBER YOU ARE THE BOSS!!** Your tax money pays the legislators' salaries, and also pays for the paper they write on and the phone they call you on. You should be courteous, but don't be intimidated. They are responsible to you, and nine out of ten legislators are grateful for your help.

Adapted from the Maine Women's Lobby "Ten Informal Rules for Lobbying"



2. Tips for Working with Your Legislator

Adapted with permission from The Maine Women's Lobby

If they Strongly Agree with Your Position

- Thank them
- Ask them to take a lead/ active role on this issue a) in the Legislature among their colleagues b) in the media c) in the community
- Ask for advice on who else you should talk to, what supporting arguments they think are effective, and any special legislative strategy they think you should use
- Ask if they will “lobby” undecided legislators
- Thank them again

If they Agree with Your Position

- Thank them
- Assure them of your continued interest in the issue and your continued support of their position
- Ask if they would be willing to help in any way beyond their vote (follow tips above)

If they Are Undecided

- Inform them of your interest
- Present your argument as concisely and clearly as possible
- Ask them what their reservations are. Determine if they are political, personal, due to a lack of information or any combination. Alter your strategy accordingly
- Offer to get any information they would like
- Ask them if there are other individuals/organizations they would like to hear from
- Get back to them; keep in touch until they have made up their mind

If they Are Against Your Position

- Determine how strongly they are opposed. If not too strongly, try and persuade them to change their mind
- If they strongly disagree, write them and let them know of your opposition to their position, but don't waste your time and energy trying to move an immovable object.



3. Calling your Senator or Representative

To Leave a Message

1. **All Senators:** leave a recorded message with the LD # at 1-800-423-6900, or to talk to a staff person call 287-1540
2. **All Representatives:** leave a recorded message with the LD # at 1-800-423-2900, or to talk to a staff person call 287-1400

At Their Home

It is okay to call legislators at home, they expect this. Home phone numbers may be obtained through the Office of Legislative Information at 287-1692, or through Maine's website at: www.Maine.Gov. Please don't call before 8:00 am or after 8:30 pm.

Sample Format:

"Hello Representative Jones" or "Senator Smith"

"My name is _____. I am a voter in your district and I would like to talk to you about (bill number and title). Is this a good time?"

"I would like to urge you to vote for/against this bill because ..." (give a couple reasons).

If you know what committee the bill is in, or any action that may have been taken on this issue thus far, let your Legislator know

Have your facts straight and back them up with references

End with "Thank You"

Sample Message:

"Hello, my name is Joe Bananas from Acton, Maine. Please let Representative Jones know that I am opposed to LD 1XXX. He can reach me at 207-XXX-XXXX. I would appreciate a call back. Thank you."



4. Letter to a Legislator – One approach

Date

Your Name
1234 Your Street
Your Town, ME 12345
207-555-1234

The Honorable Your Senator or Representative
Their Address
Their Town, ME 12345

Dear Senator or Representative _____,

In these difficult financial times it is important to have our priorities straight. It is in regard to these priorities that I write to you today, urging you to protect and preserve our state's health care programs and in particular, the Fund for a Healthy Maine.

The Fund for a Healthy Maine was created in 1999 with the promise of new health initiatives to help counter the devastating health effects of tobacco use. It was a bold idea and a bold program, and it has made Maine a national model for the use of our tobacco settlement dollars. It is also paying off. Youth smoking rates are down by 36% and over 850 people called the State's tobacco HelpLine in its first four months of operation. In addition to tobacco prevention and cessation, the Fund for a Healthy Maine also provides funding for school health programs, substance abuse treatment, Start ME Right, and oral health care, among others. These are programs that provide vital health services to many of our most vulnerable populations. The Fund must be protected.

The reality is that the Fund for a Healthy Maine is an INVESTMENT in our future – our future health and our future economy. Healthy kids do better in school; healthy workers are more productive; and healthy adults save the state and taxpayers money. For example, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, every pack of cigarettes sold leads to \$8.46 in health care costs and productive lives lost. Tobacco use costs Maine about \$470 million every year in direct medical expenses alone. Clearly, Maine's health care costs from tobacco use alone will far outpace any "savings" from cutting the Fund for a Healthy Maine. Ultimately, cuts to the Fund for a Healthy Maine will just make a bad health care situation worse.

Optional: Add a personal story here. Why you are a member of the coalition? How have these programs affected you? How has smoking (or another related health care issue) affected your life or the lives of family and friends? What will continued funding allow to happen – what's left to be done?

In sum, the Fund for a Healthy Maine is not another Rainy Day Fund available to fill budget shortfalls. The tobacco settlement money has come to Maine at no small cost to our health and our economy. The Fund for a Healthy Maine programs were promised to the people of Maine to help offset the devastating health effects of tobacco use. The Fund for a Healthy Maine should be dedicated to funding health programs ONLY, so we can fulfill our promise to those who need services.

I urge you to look at alternatives to solve the budget shortfall. This should include making sure that the Fund for a Healthy Maine, and, in fact, ALL health care programs are fully funded before any excess dollars are used to refill the state's Rainy Day Fund.

A reply to this letter would be greatly appreciated. I can be reached at (your phone number). Thank you for your time and commitment to the people of Maine.

Sincerely,
Your Name



Community Activities

1. Community Resources

1. Community Resources

Television- Use local television studios for public service announcements and discussion round tables on the projects your program is working on in the community.

Radio- Use local radio stations to announce upcoming events, discussion round tables, program promotion and recognition.

Websites- Create a website promoting your program. Include your mission statement, current and upcoming activities, links to similar programs, community news, etc. Announce your website to legislators and other community leaders.

Posters- Design posters advertising your program and the work you're doing in the community. Include phone numbers for interested people to call and get more information about your program. Hang posters in visible places such as community bulletin boards, libraries, community centers, school hallways, etc.

Local Paper- Write and submit articles to your local paper about your program, your activities, and opportunities for community members to get involved or help support your program. Think about a monthly article to keep the community updated on your program.



2. How to Plan a Legislative Reception

A legislative reception is an excellent way to bring your community members, coalition/ campaign members, and legislators together to learn more about your work to keep Maine healthy, active, and tobacco free. In many communities the breakfast hour is a convenient time to hold a meeting. However, we suggest you find the time that works best for your community (i.e., lunch, after school, dinner). The Legislature begins its regular session work in January and the members become extremely busy and pressed for time. We encourage coalitions/campaigns to look toward the last weeks in November and first weeks in December to schedule events. Below is a list of pointers on how to make the most of your meeting. These are only suggestions and should be modified for your individual community needs.

1. **Call your legislators and find out their availability**
2. **Determine the best time and date for the community and legislators**
3. **Determine and reserve location**
4. **Call/email coalition/campaign and community members regarding event**
5. **Reserve a caterer**
 - Hints on food: Meal should be hearty yet healthy. Be sure to remember those with special dietary needs like vegetarians.
6. **Plan presentation**
 - An hour to an hour and fifteen minutes is a good time frame for the entire event. Here is a suggested outline:
 - 15 minutes for socializing/food
 - 10 minutes for legislator and participant introductions
 - 15-20 minutes for presentation; presentation handouts are a great way to keep the participants involved and give them reference points for later use
 - 15-20 minutes for questions; “planting” community members to prompt legislators on specific issues is an effective way to communicate information outside of the main presentation
 - 5-10 minutes for wrap-up and summary
7. **Send a handwritten note to legislators thanking them in advance for attending the event. This will also serve as a reminder of the event.**
8. **Create nametags for participants that include the district/business/organization they represent.**
9. **Have your business cards or contact information readily available for all legislators and participants.**
10. **Create a poster display focusing on the work your coalition/campaign is doing to keep Maine healthy, active, and tobacco free. You may want to have the contact information available.**
11. **After the event send a handwritten note to your legislators thanking them for attending the meeting.**

Working with the Media

1. Tips for Interviewing with the Media
2. Media Interview Fact Sheet
3. Tips for Writing Effective Letters to the Editor
4. Media Contact List



1. Tips for Interviewing with the Media

Developing Key Messages

- ◆ Develop your key message. What is the most important point that you want to get across?
- ◆ Practice stating your key message in several different ways.
- ◆ Always state your main or key message whenever you answer a question.
- ◆ State your key message first, don't build up to it. If you build up to it, you risk that it won't be used.
- ◆ Keep it Short and Simple (KISS). If you use a lot of words, your message will be edited by an editor – not by you.
- ◆ Avoid jargon, acronyms, and technical terms. Give the information in a way that a sixth grader would understand.
- ◆ Use colorful language, anecdotes, and analogies to make your points stand out.

General tips

- ◆ Be conversational when talking to a reporter.
- ◆ Make eye contact with the reporter; don't talk to the camera.
- ◆ Smile unless it is inappropriate to the subject matter. Smiling will make you more personable.
- ◆ If you don't know, say so and offer to get back to the reporter. Then do it. Don't speculate or guess.
- ◆ If you don't like the way you said something, ask to say it again.
- ◆ Be positive when making your points. Speak with authority.
- ◆ When giving telephone interviews with print and radio reporters stand up and move around. You'll be more animated and that will come through over the telephone.
- ◆ Be responsive, but don't let reporters make their deadlines into your problem.
- ◆ Practice with a colleague before the interview.

Dress

How you look may be as important as what you say. Here are some tips for looking your best on camera.

- ◆ In general, dress should be simple and conservative.
- ◆ Avoid plaids, checks and other patterns unless they are subtle.
- ◆ Remove glasses if you can see OK without them. Glasses glare and tend to hide your eyes. Remove glasses at least 15 minutes before an on-camera interview.

- ◆ Remember to remove your employee ID badge before going on camera.
- ◆ It's a good idea to keep a nice jacket in your office in case you are asked for an on-camera interview.

For Men:

- Suits or sport coats are best
- Ties should be solid in color or simple design
- Remove pens, lapel pins, and anything that might be distracting

For Women:

- Suits and jackets are best
- Skirts should not be too short
- Makeup should be subdued
- Avoid dangling earrings and flashy jewelry that might be distracting

Bridging Statements

“Bridging” is responding to a question by answering the question you want to answer, not the one that was asked. It's a way to keep the interview on track, to control it, and to get your message out. Here are just a few examples of bridging statements.

- ◆ “I think it is important to know....”
- ◆ “We see it from a different perspective...”
- ◆ “Let's look at the bigger picture...”
- ◆ “Let's talk about what is happening...”
- ◆ “Let me set the record straight...”

Common Traps

There are some common “traps” that people fall into when giving interviews. Sometimes reporters will intentionally set up the interview to get a better quote; sometimes these happen spontaneously. In either event, keep them in mind when being interviewed. Always keep your cool and never argue with or condescend to a reporter.

- ◆ *Off the record*—you are never off the record. Consider anything that you say to a reporter as a potential quote.
- ◆ *The long pause*—sometimes a reporter will pause after you've answered in an effort to keep you talking. When you've finished answering a question, don't feel compelled to fill a silence by continuing to talk.
- ◆ *The derogatory remark*—if a reporter makes a derogatory remark about an opponent or policy maker, don't take the bait. Ignore the comment and bridge to your key message
- ◆ *The phantom authority*—the reporter makes a vague reference to a study or a quote by an unnamed authority. Don't respond unless the reporter can provide exact information about the study and author.
- ◆ *Badgering*—the reporter asks the same question over and over or asks the same question in several different ways in an effort to get the response for which s/he is looking. Don't concede the point. Bridge to your message.
- ◆ *Irrelevant questions*—if a reporter asks a question that is not relevant to the topic or your area of expertise, bridge to your message.



3. Tips for Writing Effective Letters to the Editor

- Be concise. Keep your letters under 250 words.
- Capture attention. Start with an opening line that summarizes your point.
- Use simple language. You want all readers to be able to understand your message. If an eighth grader couldn't understand it, then it's not simple enough.
- Make your pitch. Remember, you are essentially "selling" an idea - combine logic and emotional language and make it memorable.
- Restate your message. End by asking your readers to support your position and take action.

Sample letter to the editor:

We can pay now, or we can pay later. That's what legislators should keep in mind as they struggle to get the state's finances in order. As lawmakers look at all the possible options to fill the budget shortfall, they will likely consider taking another shot at the Fund for a Healthy Maine. As tempting as it might be, this strategy will be a financial disaster for Maine in the long-run.

The Fund for a Healthy Maine is our state's effort to put our tobacco settlement dollars to work for the health of Maine citizens. This money has come to us at no small health and economic cost. Millions of dollars in health costs and tens of thousands of lives have been lost in the battle against Big Tobacco. This settlement money, the Fund for a Healthy Maine, is our only chance to break the cycle of tobacco addiction and disease.

The Fund for a Healthy Maine is at work in our communities - educating our young people and providing support for all who want to quit smoking. In its short existence, the Fund has put a dent in Maine's grim smoking statistics. But there is much left to be done. Ultimately, we will all pay the price if our lawmakers dismantle the Fund - some with our lives, and all with our pocketbooks.

For the sake of our health and financial future, tell your legislator that the Fund for a Healthy Maine is not the medicine to cure their financial woes.



4. Media Contact List

Daily Newspapers:

Bangor Daily News

PO Box 1329
Bangor, ME 04402
Phone: 207 990-8000
Fax: 207 941-9476
Email: bdnmail@bangordailynews.net
Website: www.bangornews.com
Press release accepted via email: Yes

Lewiston Sun Journal

PO Box 4400
Lewiston, ME 04243
Phone: 207 784-5411
Fax: 207 777-3436
Email: editor@sunjournal.com
Website: www.sunjournal.com
Press release accepted via email: Yes

Journal Tribune

PO Box 627
Biddeford, ME 04005
Phone: 207 282-1535
Fax: 207 282-3138
Email: jtribune@gwi.net
Website: www.journaltribune.com
Press release accepted via email: Yes

Kennebec Journal

274 Western Ave
Augusta, ME 04330
Phone: 207 623-3811
Fax: 207 623-2220
Email: kjedit@centralmaine.com
Website: www.kjonline.com
Press release accepted via email: Yes

Morning Sentinel

31 Front Street
Waterville, ME 04903-0589
Phone: 207 873-3341
Fax: 207 861-9191
Email: msedit@centralmaine.com
Website: www.centralmaine.com
Press release accepted via email: Yes

Portland Press Herald

PO Box 1460
Portland, ME 04104
Phone: 207 791-6650
Fax: 207 791-6920
Email: news@pressherald.com
Web: www.pressherald.com
Press release accepted via email: Yes

The Times Record

PO Box 10
Brunswick, ME 04011
Phone: 207 729-3311
Fax: 207 729-5728
Email: news@timesrecord.com
Web: www.timesrecord.com
Press release accepted via email: yes

Foster's Daily Democrat (York Bureau)

PO Box 451
York, ME 03909
Phone: 207 363-4413 x 5470
Fax: 207 363-5530
Email:
Web: www.fosters.com
Press release accepted via email: no

Portsmouth Herald (York Bureau)

PO Box 2000
York, ME 03909-2000
Phone: 207 363-6179
Press release accepted via email: no

Associated Press

75 Market St., PO Box 15008
Portland, ME 04112
Phone: 207 772-4157
Fax: 207 774-6625
Email: cone@ap.org
Web: www.ap.org/nne/
Press release accepted via email: call first

Radio Stations:

Maine Public Radio

PO Box 1628
Portland, ME 04104
Phone: 207 874-6570
Fax: 207 761-0318
Email: comments@mpbc.org
Website: www.mpbc.org

WGAN AM 560:

420 Western Ave.
South Portland, ME 04106
Phone: 207 761-5600
Fax: 207 761-7765
Email: news@wgan.com
Web: www.wgan.com

Television News:

WLBZ-TV Channel 2

PO Box 415
Bangor, ME 04402
Phone: 207 942-4821
Fax: 207 942-2109 (News)
Email: bevan@wlbz.gennetn.com
Website: www.wlbz.com

WCSH-TV Channel 6

1 Congress Square
Portland, ME 04101
Phone: 207 828-6666
Fax: 207 828-6630
Email: Newscenter@wssh6.com

WGME 13

1335 Washington Avenue
Portland, ME 04103
Phone: 207 797-9330
Fax: 207 878-7479
Email: tvmail@wgme.com
Website: www.wgme.com

WMTW-TV Channel 8

PO BOX 9501
Portland, ME 04101
Phone: 207 775-1800
Fax: 207 782-2165, 207 775-6253
Email: wmtw@wmtw.com
Web: www.wmtw.com

WABI-TV Channel 5

35 Hildreth St
Bangor, ME 04401
Phone: 207 947-8321
Fax: 207 941-9378
Email: wabi@wabi-tv.com
Website: www.wabi-tv.com

WAGM-TV, Channel 8

PO Box 1149
Presque Isle, ME 04769
Phone: 207 764-4461
Fax: 207 764-5329
Email: wagmtv@wagm-tv.com

WVH Channel 7

371 Target Industrial Circle
Bangor, ME 04401
Phone: 207 945- 6457
Fax: 207 945-6864



Election Activity

Very few things are more important to non-profits than elections – especially to those organizations that receive state or federal funds. Unfortunately, nothing scares non-profits more than being accused of “electioneering.” The Maine Coalition on Smoking or Health can not offer legal advice, but we are always available to answer questions about electioneering.

Without breaking any rules, there is a lot you can do to make sure that your elected leaders and candidates for office understand the importance of what you do – and how it impacts their district.

What you can (and should) do

- **Keep your ear to the ground in your hometown.**
 - What are people talking about? What issues are important to people? Who do they listen to? Who are the perceived town leaders?
- **Get town leaders involved in your events.**
 - Make sure all elected and non-elected leaders are invited to your events and get your mailings all year long. This includes the president of the library board, the vice president of the chamber of commerce, the local Girl Scout troop leaders etc. The more people who are invested in your organization the harder it will be for decision-makers to cut your budget.
- **Find out if any of your board members or volunteers know the candidates.**
 - Make sure your volunteers are informed on the issues that are important to your organization.
 - What are the three basic things that you want people to know about your organization? Put together talking points. What do you do? Why do you do it? How are you helping your community?
- **Educate all candidates about your program.**
 - As long as you give all the candidates the same information you are not “electioneering.”
- **Host a candidate forum.**
 - It is imperative that you (and your neighbors) know how different candidates stand on your issues. The best way to find out is to have a candidate forum. Team up with other local organizations and hold a forum. Make sure your questions are heard and answered. Pick an un-biased moderator and advertise the forum in the paper so you get an unbiased audience.

(Continued....)

- **Attend candidate forums held by others and ask questions.**
 - If you don't have time to organize a forum, make sure your volunteers attend other forums and ask questions. The Maine Coalition staff can help you formulate these questions.

It is your Constitutional right as a private citizen to work to elect the best candidate for the issues you care about.

What you can't (and should not) do:

- **Your organization cannot endorse candidates.**
 - Your board members and volunteers can (as private citizens) write letters to the editor, volunteer to put up signs, etc. This all needs to be done in their free time – but think of all the free time you will have if the wrong person gets elected and sets different priorities that deplete your program's funding.
- **Your organization cannot hold biased candidate forums.**
 - It is against IRS rules to hold a candidate forum on an issue that directly favors one candidate – so join others in your town and have a multi-issue debate – make sure you have an unbiased audience.
- **Your organization can't give money or in-kind donations to candidates.**
 - Don't let candidates use your office space, phones, etc. Only for-profit businesses can make such donations.

*You can always give candidates information about your organization.
Just make sure you give the same information to every candidate.*



Working to improve the health of Maine citizens by eliminating tobacco addiction and exposure to secondhand smoke through education and advocacy.

Public Policy Goals:

- Protect the Fund for a Healthy Maine – Maine’s tobacco settlement funds
- Promote policies to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke
- Ensure low or no-cost smoking cessation services for all Maine residents
- Use financial disincentives as a tool to reduce youth smoking (e.g., the tobacco excise tax)

Coalition Work:

- Broaden the membership of the Maine Coalition on Smoking or Health (with a focus on reaching diverse and low-income populations)
- Provide advocacy training and technical assistance.
- Develop a policy research program (help develop a proactive policy agenda, track tobacco trends in and outside of Maine, and respond to rapid requests from partner organizations and the public)

Maine Coalition on Smoking or Health Staff

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