EXAMPLE OF WHAT TO DO IN A MEETING WITH A LEGISLATOR

Hopefully, before meeting the legislator you will meet his aide(s). Get to know the aide(s), as they can help a lot in future in getting information to the legislator and getting him to meet or talk with you.

When you meet the legislator, open by thanking the legislator for his time and for his public service.

Then briefly introduce yourself and those whom you have brought to the meeting, including their roles in the CoS movement.

Ask some questions of the legislator that will get himself talking about himself and his interests. E.g., what did you consider the most rewarding aspect of the last legislative session? Did you have some goals you weren’t able to achieve that you’d like to work on next session? Have you done or do you plan any travel this summer? What have you found interests your constituents the most?

Don’t rush into the CoS discussion, but don’t make it appear you are wasting the legislator’s time. Ease into the CoS discussion with a general question such as, “What do you know about Article V of the U.S. Constitution and movements to use it to propose amendments?” Let the legislator tell you what he knows, what he’s heard. This should draw out the issues he has with Article V. Tailor your questions and comments to the areas that seem to trouble the legislator.

When it is comfortable for the CoS meeting leader to take initiative in the discussion, explain the main reason for the meeting.

The Convention of States movement has grass roots organizations in all 50 states. Supporters sign a petition to legislators asking that the CoS resolution be passed. In Colorado we are approaching 27,000 petition signers, with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in your district alone. Between 400 and 1,000 a month sign the petition. We have worked with many legislators and found that much incorrect information about Article V conventions has been disseminated. Our main objective now is to educate legislators on Article V and address their questions so they are fully informed. We are committed to this because we want legislators to understand their responsibility to make an Article V convention available to the citizens, not to stand it its way.

Be prepared to respond to the legislator’s questions, objections, and concerns. Reading the handouts described below and Professor Natelson’s book should prepare you well to address the most common questions. But don’t feel that you have to be able to answer all questions. If you can’t answer a question, just say you don’t feel you can respond with a complete answer, that we have experts on all aspects of Article V, that you will research the question and will get back to the legislator by letter or email.

Do not interrupt.

You are there more to learn what is on the legislator’s mind than to tell him what’s on yours.

God gave us two ears and one mouth for a reason.

A good way to close the meeting is by giving written information to the legislator. Items that are good to give to a legislator:

1. Current map and lists of states where the resolution has passed both houses, one house, committees, etc. (available at <https://conventionofstates.com/news/download-the-latest-convention-of-states-progress-map-for-free> )
2. The pattern resolution (available at <https://conventionofstates.com/files/model-convention-of-states-application> )
3. 7 page document customized for the legislator addressing common questions (Maurice can provide)
4. Screen shot from the LMS showing number of petitions signed in the legislator’s district; offer to email full list of signers to the legislator
5. Copy of Professor Natelson’s book
6. Your business card

Be sure to get the legislator’s business card and any other contact information he is willing to provide. A very sympathetic legislator may give you a private cell number etc.

Maurice Emmer

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