



NEVADA STATE ELKS ASSOCIATION

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE MANUAL

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1.0 Purpose

To protect the fundamental American right of free association and preserve the social and economic future of all private, voluntary associations of individuals. To protect our constitutional right of private assembly, private association, and the exercise of free choice with regard to these rights.

2.0 Scope

To establish within the State Association a network of informed members who will monitor, analyze, and report on all legislative, regulatory and legal matters in areas of concern; to keep all legislators and local government officials informed of the purpose and programs of the B.P.O.E.; and to advise their district and state leaders of political developments in their local community.

3.0 Responsibilities

3.1 NSEA Vice-President Liaison

- The VP liaison, with the assistance of the State Chair, will provide a written quarterly report to the Executive Committee.
- The VP liaison will assist in coordinating details and arranging for all state convention programs and workshops.
- The VP liaison will assist the State Chair designee in coordinating funding activities through the use of the "Budget Request Form" each February.

3.2 State Government Relations Chairman

- Monitor legislative action on a municipal, county, state and federal level.
- Each quarter attend a meeting with the Executive Committee and provide a report of your committee's actions, achievements and/or challenges. If unable to attend the Quarterly meeting, a member of the committee may represent the State Chair. If the Chair or a member of the committee cannot attend the Quarterly, the Chair will submit a written report outlining the Committee's actions, successes, failures and send it to the committee's Liaison Officer at least ten days prior to the meeting. (Quarterly meetings are held on the 3rd weekend in June, October, January and April. The Secretary/Manager will provide notices of these meetings.)
- Coordinate programs with other fraternal and sororal groups.
- Respond to requests for assistance on national level from Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee.
- Hold quarterly State Committee meetings. * Schedule for and hold area Government Relations Committee receptions for municipal, county and state government officials.

- Write article for the State Newsletter per approved schedule. The Article must be at state office by the 5th day of the preceding month.
- Write article to the State Newspaper as needed. Articles need to be sent directly to State Newspaper (Nevada Elk-issued quarterly) by the 10th day of the preceding month of publication.
- Monitor Working Committee activities and assist in finding volunteers to serve on the Working Committee who will fulfill duties and responsibilities as outlined in this manual.
- Provide Vice President with agenda for convention programs and workshops 60 days prior to convention. January workshop should focus on committee training. June workshop should highlight last year's successes and detail a description of new programs.
- Committee reports must be presented to the State President, in writing, 60 days prior to a convention. The State President will make final determination on all committee reports and presentations to be given at the state conventions. Speeches on the convention floor will be limited and must be vital information for the whole assembly.
- Incoming State Chair will provide detailed budget information to the President-Elect each February through the use of the "Budget Request Form".
- File copies of all correspondence and reports with the State Association Secretary and the VP liaison.
- Obtain stationary, forms and reports as required from the State Association Secretary.
- Turn over all files and records in his charge to the succeeding State Chair.
- Provide committee training to Working Committee and Lodge Chairmen.
- The Vice Chair shall aid the State Chair in the performance of the above duties.
- The Chair will send a congratulatory letter to each elected official at the state level during the month of November annually.

3.3 Working Committee

- Coordinate with and report on a quarterly basis to the State Chair Government Relations Committee in writing.
- Attend State Association conventions, workshops and training seminars.
- Make and report on such special inquiries as requested by the State Chair.
- Make certain that each Lodge Chair in his area has a copy of the latest Government Relations Manual.
- Work with and train your Lodge Chair to improve their Government Relations program at the local lodge level.

- Organize and monitor the September area Government Relations Committee Leaders reception.
- Assist the State Chair in finding your replacement upon your retirement.

4.0 Procedure Requirements

The Government Relations program is intended to reach every member of the Nevada State Legislature, our Congressional Delegation, and local government groups such as city councils; and to advise them of the aims and goals of Elkdom; and to assist our legislators in serving the social and economic attributes of a private, voluntary association; and to impress upon them the benefits and contributions made by the fraternal organizations of the State of Nevada.

4.1 Nevada State Government Reception

The State Chair, with the assistance of the Vice Chair and the members of the State Government Relations Committee, will plan and present an annual reception to be held in Olympia during the month of January each odd dated year and March in each even dated year.

The officers and committee members will develop a program, prepare the necessary invitations, set the time, and make the necessary preparation for this reception.

It will be the duty of the committee to plan and prepare the following:

- Exhibits
- Invitations to local, state, and national Elk dignitaries.
- Training for the reception hosts and hostesses.
- Secure the necessary food and beverages.
- Name tags, decoration, greeters and agenda.
- Notice for the Elks state newspaper.
- Press releases for state newspapers.

5.0 References

Grand Lodge Government Relations Manual

6.0 Appendix

- A. Yearly Report
- B. Lodge Government Relations Committee
- C. Budget Request Form
- D. Government Relations Day Planning Guide
- E. Training

APPENDIX B – Lodge Government Relations Committee

Lodge Chairman

- Obtain and familiarize yourself with the Government Relations Committee Manual.
- Submit to the State Chair the yearly Lodge Government Relations report by May 1.
- Seek training and advice from the Working Committee and State Chair.
- Assist the Exalted Ruler in organizing and appointing the Lodge Government Relations Committee.
- Hold Lodge Government Relations training sessions.
- Contact local legislative leaders regarding Government Relations annual and local receptions.

Regional Legislative Reception

Each Exalted Ruler, under the directions of the State Chair, will plan and present an annual reception at his Lodge during the month of October for his District Legislators and city and county officials.

Under the direction of the State Chair, the Working Committee, the members of the State Government Relations Committee, along with the Lodge Chair, will prepare and present a program for the local legislators.

Each September, each Exalted Ruler and Lodge Chair will extend an invitation to their local legislators and city and county officials for the regional Government Relations Reception. The reception will be similar to the one conducted by the State Association, biennially.

Each Exalted Ruler will send a congratulatory letter to elected officials in their Lodge area during the month of November annually.

APPENDIX C – Budget Request Form

Nevada State Elks Association
Budget Request Form

Committee
State Chairman

Specific Program Goals for Fiscal Year : Date:

- 1.
2.
3.

Will your Committee generate any funds? Yes No How Much? \$

How will these funds be raised?

State Association Funds required to accomplish the goals:

Committee Operations: (Postage, Phone, Copies, etc.) \$

Awards: (Plaques, pins, etc. – Please specify.)

1. \$

2. \$

Grants – Please specify District or State \$

Other requests – Please specify:

\$

\$

Do you plan for any Capital Expenditures? Yes No

Specify: \$

TOTAL REQUESTED \$

Signature of State Chairman

Endorsement by Liaison Officer

Approval by President-Elect

Approval by Board of Trustees

(ATTACH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AS NEEDED TO SUPPORT REQUESTS)

APPENDIX D – Government Relations Day

1. Coordinate with the Capitol visitor's Center to establish dates and room usage for the event.
 - a. For even numbered years (short session), the event should be scheduled at the end of February or early March.
 - b. For odd numbered years (long session), the event should be scheduled on the Tuesday before Winter convention. This will allow Grand Lodge and State officers to attend.
 - c. Arrange parking passes to load and unload displays, etc.
2. In coordination with the NSEA office, send invites to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Representatives and Senators at least 10 days prior to the event.
3. Coordinate with a caterer at least 60 days prior to the event. Arrangements should be made to serve 75-100 people hors d'oeuvres, coffee, tea, and water. The caterer should also provide all plates, cups, napkins, serving ware, etc.
4. Coordinate with the NSEA Public Relations Chair for press coverage:
 - a. News releases should go to the major newspapers in the state.
 - b. Television coverage should be arranged.
 - c. Official photographers (Governor, House, Senate) should be contacted for photo sessions.
5. Contact the majority and minority leadership in the Senate and House to arrange for the NSEA President to speak to the various caucuses.
6. In coordination with the state office, contact NSEA Chairs to arrange for them to attend the event with their various displays.
7. Coordinate with the NSEA PR Chair to ensure folders are available for the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Representatives and Senators. The folder should include a history of the Elks, a pamphlet showing that "Elks Care, Elks Share", and our contributions throughout the state for the prior year.
8. Coordinate with the Carson City Elks Lodge for parking and transportation for all Elk participants to and from the Capitol Building.

APPENDIX E – TRAINING

PHASE I - EDUCATE OURSELVES

A. ESTABLISH SPEAKERS BUREAU

1. Identify competent speakers who will visit Lodges throughout the state on a planned schedule. These could be open meetings, with wives and guests invited.
2. Make an organized, disciplined effort to achieve total coverage. The Chair should plan and conduct a seminar, provide fact sheets and subject outline with documentary backup as an aid to the speakers.
3. Meetings should be given good publicity to assure large participation.
4. Attendees should be encouraged to become involved.

B. NEWSLETTER OR PAPER

1. Publish a special edition of any state newsletter or send letter concentrating on the problem, how serious it is, what has to be done, what the consequences of inaction will be, why it is everyone's job, what each member can and must do.
2. Make an appeal to the Ladies for their help.
3. Newsletter or paper, etc., should go to every Elk in the state. Lodges should arrange for their distribution, working with the state office.

C. LODGE BULLETINS

1. Conduct a clinic for Lodge Bulletin Editors to solicit their help and educate them on how to utilize their paper as a means of informing the members.
2. Provide the editors with a steady flow of correct information.
3. Encourage each bulletin editor to establish an "Our Legislators" column, designed to keep the members aware of legislative activity. Ask for contributions of articles from Legislators to such a column.

D. CLIPPING SERVICE

1. Buy or establish a clipping service to collect all new items and other printed or published material relating to the subject of Fraternal Organizations in general, and specifically Elks - Statements by Public Officials - Agencies - Individuals.
2. Make significant data available to all Lodges.
3. Utilize this data to institute action to refute incorrect statements.

E. CLEARING HOUSE

1. Establish an office as the clearinghouse for all relevant material.
2. Develop and distribute Posters - Articles - Abstracts - to Lodges for display and/or dissemination to Members, Lodges, News Media, etc.
3. Develop fact sheets with current, correct information relating to the things we do, what we stand for, why we feel the way we do.

PHASE II "TELL YOUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS" PROGRAM

1. State Chairmen and the Working Committee should hold briefing seminars with Subordinate Lodge committees.
 - a. So they have the facts
 - b. So they understand the approach
 - c. Identify all Legislators to Lodges, and particularly identify those who are members or wives of members.
2. Develop letter outline for use by Elk Members in writing to their Legislators.
3. Develop "Fact Sheet" to accompany letters to be incorporated into letter.
4. Don't hesitate to praise Legislators who are working to support our cause nor to name those who do not.
5. Solicit support of wives in letter writing campaigns.
6. Develop statistical data identifying Elk Lodges and membership by legislative district.
7. Provide each Exalted Ruler and bulletin editor with a steady flow of actions in the legislature and how they vote.
8. List all local and state political or private figures that make statements pro or con regarding fraternal organizations and provide these to appropriate bulletin editors.
9. Take all steps necessary to keep a constant flow of mail going to the State Capitol or Congress, etc.
10. Regularly check volume of mail and how the Legislators are reacting.

PHASE III EDUCATE OTHERS

A. ENGAGE A PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRM

1. Define objectives and scope
2. Select a firm
3. Measure results

B. SPEAKERS BUREAU

1. Select a group of competent Elk Speakers to speak to other organizations: Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions, etc.: schools, ladies groups, church groups, and other organizations.
2. Provide each speaker with a "Fact Kit".
3. Consider use of indoctrination slides.

C. ARRANGE FOR TV AND RADIO TIME

1. Arrange for special coverage on events involving youth awards and all other patriotic, civic, or charitable programs.
2. Panel discussion programs - Pro and Con.
3. Solicit help from sympathetic radio and TV newscasters and commentators.
4. Provide a steady stream of Newsworthy items to Local Newspapers, Radio, and TV Stations.

PHASE IV WORK WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

1. Establish a coordinator to work closely with other private, patriotic, Fraternal, Sororal, and social clubs to make certain we are avoiding unnecessary duplication of effort, and are working toward a common objective.
2. Provide other organizations with data to aid them in their efforts.
3. Urge the formation of a coordinated unified organization that would be representative of all organizations in your state that are interested in the common goal of preserving the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR PUBLIC OFFICIAL

Communication with your Legislators is an essential duty for members of our organization. Legislators do read their mail, they do consider personal communication, and they do review committee testimony.

You can provide all three: write letters or telegrams, make personal contact, or testify before committee hearings.

LETTER WRITING

1. Make sure you contact the Representative or Senator from the district in which you live--that district may be different from the one in which your place of business or Lodge is located.
2. Address your letter as follows: Senator (or Representative) John Doe, State Legislature, (STATE CAPITOL), (STATE), (ZIP CODE).
3. Limit your letter of contact to one specific subject. Tell your Legislator briefly what the issue is, identifying it if at all possible by Bill Number. Describe the Bill, and tell its status in the Legislature (i.e. first reading in committee etc.).
4. Be polite. Don't use your legislator as a sounding board for your opinions on government in general. Don't demand his vote--ask for it.
5. Whenever possible, use logic and hard information to make your case, demonstrating how the legislation would affect you.
6. Time your letter well. Only a fraction of the legislation introduced ever goes through the legislative process. Wait until the measure is in Committee, or is scheduled for a Committee Hearing before making your move.
7. Avoid stereotyped form letters or phrases. The Legislators will recognize a stack of these as coming from the same source, and their impact will be minimized.
8. Express your appreciation if the Legislator supports your position. A short "Thank You" notes or telephone call will be appreciated.

TELEGRAMS

Telegrams are an essentially valuable communication device when timing is of the essence. These are generally transmitted to Legislators right at their desks in the chambers, rather than to their office.

TELEPHONE

1. You may call directly to the Legislator's office. Phone numbers may be obtained through the Capitol's information line.
2. If you make contact, confine your end of the conversation to the same points you would make in a letter. Offer to follow up with written information or background materials.

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Constituents are notorious for their lack of participation in this most important medium of communication. Committee hearings are of particular interest. We urge you to participate. The Committee meetings are usually informal and friendly. You will usually be addressing from 10 to 15 Legislators and a handful of spectators in the audience. If you are interested in this vital means of presenting your view points, please:

1. Watch your state and Lodge bulletin for hearing notices on any issue you are interested in, or call your State Committee for information.
2. As early as possible, notify the appropriate staff man.
3. Notify the Legislative Committee involved of your desire to testify.
4. Read the proposed bill or proposal in question, as well as any available analyses. Then, in your testimony, relate your firsthand experience to problems, which arise from the measure being considered, even if you are testifying in behalf of a larger group or an association.
5. Consult with your Association Committee to determine the scope of the issue and thus clarify fully what your testimony should cover.
6. When you prepare testimony, be absolutely sure that all of your backup facts and figures are accurate. Thoroughly proofread your final copy for errors, misspellings, etc. Review it with your Association Committee.
7. As a courtesy, always let your Legislators (Senators and Representatives) know that you have applied for time to present testimony.
8. Keep your testimony short and to the point (five minutes is fine). It is usually best to present highlights at the hearing, and request permission to place your complete position and supporting data in the record. Such supplementary information as charts, studies, and photographs are typical items, which may be placed in the official record.
9. Identify who you are, and whom you represent, by giving your name, Lodge, or organization, and specify at the beginning of your remarks whether you are testifying for or against the proposal.
10. Avoid excessive rhetoric and propaganda. This is the surest way to invite hostile questions and possibly alienate any news media representatives covering the hearing.
11. In the event of hostile questions, keep a cool head. Don't be afraid to stop and think for a minute to answer a question properly. If you do not have the answer on the spot, never guess, but request permission to file a detailed answer at a later date. Don't be reluctant to say, "I don't know but I will get you the answer!!"
12. Make copies of your testimony available to the committee for distribution to members and the press. Send copies to your Legislators who are not on the committees that you testified before.
13. To avoid misunderstanding of your views, you may want to have a one-page press release available for distribution. Discuss with your State Committee any planned press interviews.

HOW TO GET ALONG WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR

Be Understanding:

Put yourself in a Legislator's place. Try to understand his problems, his outlook, and his aims. Then you are more likely to help him understand your problems.

Don't be an Extremist:

Remember your Legislator represents all his constituents...those you consider liberal and those you consider conservative. Don't condemn a Legislator just because he supports a piece of legislation that you think is too liberal or too conservative.

Be Friendly:

Don't contact your Legislator only when you want his vote. Invite him to your local meeting...perhaps as a speaker. Take pains to keep in touch with him throughout the year.

Be Reasonable:

Recognize that there are legitimate differences of opinion. Never indulge in threats or recriminations. They are confessions of your own weakness.

Be Thoughtful:

Commend the right things that your Legislator does. That's the way you would like to be treated.

Don't be a Busybody:

Legislators don't like to be pestered, scolded, or preached to. Neither do you.

Be Cooperative:

If your Legislator makes a reasonable request, try to comply with it. You can help him by giving him the information he needs. Don't back away for fear you are "getting into politics".

Be Realistic:

Remember that most controversial legislation is the result of compromise. It always has been so in a Democracy. Don't expect that everything will go your way, and don't be too critical when it doesn't.

Be Accurate and Factual:

The mere fact that you do or do not want a piece of legislation isn't enough. If an issue goes against you, don't rush to blame the Legislator for "failing to do what you wanted". Make certain you have the necessary information and do a good job of presenting your case.

Give Credit where it is Due:

If an issue goes the way you wanted, remember that your Legislator deserves first credit. He has the vote, not you. And remember also that many organizations and individuals participated on your side.

Learn to Evaluate Issues:

The introduction of a legislative bill does not mean that it will become a law. Whether you're for it or against it, don't get excited about it until you learn the who, what, and why of it.

Support your Legislator:

If he is running for re-election and if you believe he deserves it, give him your support. He needs workers and financial supporters. Don't become aloof at the time he needs your help.