

HOW TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE LOBBYING LETTER

Use your business letterhead when communicating your position on a bill.

Address lobbying correspondence to the author of the bill with copies to members of the committee hearing the bill and to your local legislator.

Indicate immediately which bill you're addressing by its bill number (AB ___ if it originates in the Assembly, SB ___ if it originates in the Senate), by an identifying phrase and whether you support or oppose the bill. This will help legislative staff in routing your letter.

Be sure to make clear for whom you're speaking.

Be sure to be clear about what action you want the legislator to take.

If you have a personal relationship with the legislator, take a moment to write a quick, handwritten note to draw his or her attention to your letter.

Be sure to send a copy of your letter to the Governor. Also please send a copy to the Chamber staff members assigned to the bill so they can include information on your support or opposition in their committee testimony.

March 30, 2001

The Honorable Wesley Chesbro
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 4081
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: **SB 599 (CHESBRO): SUBSTANCE-USE DISORDERS
OPPOSE - SCHEDULED FOR HEARING APRIL 4, 2001**

Dear Senator Chesbro:

The California Chamber of Commerce **OPPOSES** your **SB 599**, as introduced, which mandates health care service plans to provide coverage for substance-use disorders on the same basis as they provide coverage for any other medical care.

This bill will raise the price of the health care premiums for employers. Without this mandated benefit, a survey of employers by William M. Mercer Inc. found that in 2001, health care costs for firms and their employees are expected to rise by 17%. This is in sharp contrast to the single-digit increases that have occurred in the prior years. Because of this resurgence of health care inflation in the workplace, there is every reason to be concerned that many employers will drop their coverage or pass these increases on to their employees.

Small business currently struggles to provide health care benefits to their employees. In fact, only 53% of the smallest companies offer health insurance. Cost continues to be the number one reason cited by small employers for not offering their employees health benefits.

According to the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, researchers have found that take up rates by employees are strongly related to the affordability of the employee share of premiums. Increases of the magnitude that are expected in 2001 are likely to result in more employees unable to afford their share of the premium and a likely resurgence in the state's uninsured rate.

For the above-stated reasons, the California Chamber **OPPOSES** your **SB 599**.

Sincerely,



Zoe J. Taylor
President / C.E.O.

Keep your letter short. A succinct, one-page letter will have more impact than a longer one. If you have documentation of the bill's impact on your business, enclose it, but keep the letter short.

In many committees, staff members file correspondence according to the date of the bill's next hearing. If you know the date, be sure to include it. Including such information will help ensure your letter is read in time to have an impact.

Get to the point of your letter quickly: your support for or opposition to the bill.

Provide concrete, credible information on the impact of proposed legislation on your business.

Elected officials prefer to hear from persons in authority rather than just from staff members. A letter will have more impact if the business owner or person in a management position signs the letter.

Use boldface type, underlining or italics sparingly to emphasize important points.

Act promptly. Too many good lobbying letters arrive after a vote already has been taken.

Later . . . If the legislator does what you ask, be sure to send a thank you letter.