

How to Advocate when a Majority Government Exists

The challenge with a majority government is that it doesn't need to listen to you, especially when it has achieved its majority in the second term. Many majority governments have poor track records regarding 'listening', even to their own advisors and even when they know public opinion is against them. However frustrating majority governments are, there are many advocacy options.

The advocacy skills of CFUW and CFUW Ontario Council and its clubs are numerous and well entrenched. Here are some of the tenets we live by.

- √ If you can't change the minds of the politicians, **change public opinion**. To further your advocacy efforts, hold meetings, organize panel discussions and forums, have film nights, even have tea parties to celebrate political action, like our Famous Five involved with the Persons Case.
- √ Write to the newspapers either as Letters to the Editor or as an Op Ed a) as a club, based on policy, under the signature of your President, or b) as an individual (using our information, but not our name please).
- √ Write to your MPP, the Minister and the Premier (again, as a club, based on policy, under the signature of your President, or as an individual (using our information, but not our name please)). Granted, you are likely to only get a form letter back but with letters, it's the number that counts. Use your networks and the above-mentioned meetings to expand the numbers of letters sent. Don't forget to send copies to the opposition.
- √ Hook up with another CFUW Ontario Council Club that is working on the same issue. Maximise your reach and improve the numbers game.
- √ Use the time to listen and learn. Who are the REAL policy makers? Who has the ears of the decision makers? What really is the issue? The pendulum always swings so be ready for it.
- √ Get involved in the political party of your choice. Three of them could use your help right now. While CFUW is non-partisan, we are certainly not non-political!
- √ Support fellow members, friends and colleagues who run for office. Run yourself.

(A big thanks to Teri Shaw for the above.)

The following advice is excerpted directly from <https://csae-trillium.tv/five-ways-to-engage-with-a-new-government/>. Although it is meant for businesses and large organisations, it offers tips that are applicable to CFUW Ontario Council Clubs' advocacy efforts.

Direct Lobbying

The foundation of any advocacy campaign is direct lobbying. Association leaders should be constantly meeting with government officials to discuss issues impacting members. This includes meeting with

elected officials, public servants, and ministerial staff. Government officials are dealing with hundreds of issues a week, so it's always important to ensure that you're present. By staying engaged, you can ensure that you and your association are thought of for policy development, consultations, and other government activities.

Grassroots Advocacy

One of the best ways to engage your members in advocacy activities is at the local level. Elected officials meet constantly with lobbyists and association leaders, but really cherish the opportunity when they can meet with a member who is growing a business or employing individuals in their community. Working with your members to get them to meet with their local elected official in their constituency office or inviting them to tour their own office or project can help that official understand firsthand the breadth of the sector you represent.

Digital Advocacy

Prior to the internet, one of the ways that associations would engage a large number of members in advocacy was through letter writing campaigns. Thankfully, this process has now been digitized. Through tools like [CSAE Digital Advocacy](#), associations can create digital campaigns that allow their members to send emails directly to their local elected officials through the click of a button. These campaigns allow elected officials to know that there are dozens, or sometimes hundreds, of their constituents that are concerned about an issue. The saying "all politics is local" remains true today.

Media Relations

Every successful advocacy campaign includes a component of media relations. Through press conferences, press releases, or opinion editorials, you can ensure that the media and the public are aware of the issue that you're advocating on. Anything that gains the media's attention is sure to catch the government's attention as well. By raising the profile of your advocacy issues within the media, you can better ensure that governments pay attention to you and your association.

Social Media

Nearly every elected official uses social media, and many of them personally use some of their channels. I have seen Members of Parliament spend hours on Twitter and Instagram, responding to other users and checking their feeds. Most advocacy campaigns nowadays include a component of social media to promote messaging directly to elected officials. Either through an organic or paid campaign, platforms like Twitter and Instagram can help you to easily get your messages in front of those you're trying to reach. Social media can also help to drive traffic to your digital advocacy campaign, or promote a recent story that you had published in a newspaper. Don't forget to use this important tool!

Consult the Ontario Council Advocacy Tools on our website and CFUW National Advocacy Toolbox.

[https://cfuwontcouncil.org/advocacy/advocacy-tools/;](https://cfuwontcouncil.org/advocacy/advocacy-tools/)

<https://cfuadmin.org/?s=Advocacy+Toolbox>