

Survival tips for good-guy lobbyists

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WACO—A public policy expert told community ministry leaders the keys to being affective advocates with lawmakers are to define the problems that need addressing, research the issues and build coalitions with others who care about the issue.

Frances Deviney

Frances Deviney, Texas Kids Count director at the [Center for Public Policy Priorities](#) in Austin, spoke during a workshop at the [No Need Among You conference](#) in Waco.

Deviney offered five survival tips for "good-guy lobbyists," who represent ministries and other nonprofits:

- *Have a good sense of humor.*
- *Wear "sensible shoes" because lobbying requires being active.*
- *Build one message, stick to it, and then "beat it like a drum."*
- *Understand the basics of the state lawmaking or local ordinance process.*
- *Celebrate even small successes.*

"Legislators are people who have a lot going on," Deviney said. Rather than putting together long defenses of a position, compile a one-page summary with no more than three main points.

In making a case, "educate yourself" about the issue, present realistic solutions that are appealing for the times, and be strategic and practical, she said. Part of being strategic is knowing who will be opposing a position and seek to find common ground.

Relationships are critical to advocacy, Deviney said. "Bring in like-minded people," and "don't demonize the opponent."

—*Ferrell Foster, Christian Life Commission*