

## EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR

### **GET TO KNOW YOUR LEGISLATORS AND THEIR STAFF**

- Prior to the Legislative Session, set up an appointment with district staff to visit your State Senator and Representative in their district offices.  
\*Note: Legislators, in general, have more time to discuss issues in detail in their district offices as opposed to being time constrained up in Tallahassee.
- Attend their Town Halls; invite them to attend your Council/Commission Meetings; encourage them to stop by your office; and share important event information.
- Ask questions and find out what their priorities are – engage them. Many times, their priorities are local in nature and may affect your municipality.
- Establish a relationship with their staff. The Legislative Assistants and District Secretaries are the best way to get information to the legislator as well as finding time to fit you in when schedules are tight. They are the balancing work and well-oiled machine behind each great legislator.

### **GETTING YOUR ISSUES/CONCERNS ACROSS**

- Compose a small group of point people on League priorities. Those selected can be the main point of contact should the legislator need any additional information on the subject area.
- Prepare a one-page fact sheet concerning your issue. Make sure to be brief, clear and concise.
- If you'd like to provide additional information, local Resolutions speak volumes – whether they are in support or in opposition of an issue.
- If your concern is budget related, utilize the cost “savings” (i.e. by spending \$X, this will save the state \$XYZ).

### **KEYS FOR VISITING TALLAHASSEE**

- Familiarize yourself with the Legislative Process. Even the most basic understanding will help you effectively express your ideas.  
\*Note: Palm Beach County Day will be held on Wednesday, January 11, 2012.
- Schedule an appointment with each legislator you plan on meeting with prior to arriving, and make sure to arrange each appointment roughly 30-40 minutes apart. Many times, due to unforeseen circumstances, a meeting may be delayed and it allows for travel time should you need to go from the House to the Capitol to the Senate.
- Leave behind your one-pager. Make certain that the bill numbers (House and Senate), the sponsors and the title of the legislation are included.
- Follow Todd Bonlarron's "Legislative Weekly Updates." Because items move rapidly through the legislative process, these updates allow you to follow what issues are being placed on each agenda, as well as providing a brief summary, and what the next step(s) may be. This will provide you with the information you may need when contacting your Representative and/or Senator.