

Getting the Most Out of What You Say

Advice on Spiel

The advice given here comes from the man behind the bill and a smart meter activist who used to earn her living going door-to-door on legislative issues.

Passion is important! People respond to emotion. If you are open-hearted and passionate, people will be motivated to make that call to their representative. If they have a cell phone, they can make the call right then and there. Suggest that they do so. The people who have already been out canvassing have had incredible success getting people to call, and that is because they are passionate, concerned, and open-hearted. If you simply hand someone a flyer, they won't make the call. Engage them with friendliness and passion!

First, a couple of flying "do's." *As you talk with them, point out statements on the flyer that back up what you are saying. Spend just 2 or 3 minutes with each person. Don't hurry, but you want to engage as many people as possible. The best outcome is that they make the phone call to their rep from their cell phone as soon as you finish talking to them. Encourage this! Out of sight, out of mind.*

Second, a couple of flying "don'ts." *Don't start with questions that require them to answer yes or no. They will likely say no so they can move on. For instance, don't ask them if they'd "like a flyer." Don't ask them, "Do you have a minute." Make a statement, make eye contact, and be friendly.*

Here are some ideas on what you can say. *The first two lines are important, and you should always say them. They establish rapport, and they tell the person that there is something that they should be concerned about. Mentioning the fact that smart meters will cost the person more money will grab their attention, too.*

"Hi, my name is _____. I'm here today about a very important issue that concerns all of us. It concerns your health, your safety, your privacy, *and the price you pay for electricity.* [*Hand them a flyer.*] The utilities want us to use smart meters instead of the conventional meters we've been using for years. They're not giving us a choice. The problem with smart meters is, they are making some people very ill . . . they've caused fires, they've caused appliances to burn out. They will cause your electricity rates to rise because the utilities are going to institute peak pricing, which means you will pay more for your electricity at the times of day you most want to use it. On top of that, they invade your privacy, because the utility company can determine what appliances you are using and when you are using them, and they can sell the data to third parties. They will also allow the utility to shut off your smart-chipped appliances and to shut off your power without coming to your home."

"We think people should be given a choice, don't you agree?" [*Nod your head as you say this. Body language helps!*]

[*If they say, "Yes," then say:*]

"There's a bill being introduced in the House that will give people a choice. Are you from this area?"

[If they say, yes, then show them the back of the flyer and find their representative. If they say no, ask where they are from, and pull out the appropriate flyer, showing it to them. Then say:]

“Here’s your representative. Would you give your representative a call right now and just say, ‘I’m one of your constituents. I want to be able to have a choice about what kind of meter is put on my home. Please support the analog choice bill.’ It will take you about 30 seconds.” [At the same time, show them the back of the flyer and point out the wording they can say. You can let them use your cell phone if you have one. Getting people to call NOW is the best way to ensure the call is really made, but do not pester them about this.]

*“Just one thing before you call. What we are doing with the call you are about to make is getting the committee to pass the bill along to the House. Once it is in the House, we will have to make a push again. Can we get your contact info so we can let you know when that happens?” [Pull out your clipboard with our **Contact Info** sheet and show it to them. Use your finger to put to what you are talking about next.]*

“Here’s a place for your name and so on. Here’s where you can check to receive Critical Updates. You will only get a couple of those in a year. We will send one when it’s time to call your representative again or push your senator to take action Here’s where you can receive our regular newsletter, which comes out every week or two and gives you important information on the bill and on what your utility company is doing.” [Anyone who has not been enthusiastic about the bill should not be interested in signing this. If that type of person signs it, make some sort of mark. They could be a utility spy. We wouldn’t really expect this, but just to play it safe.]

[Give the flyer to everyone who says they will call.]

“Thank you so much. Please do make that call right now. And please tell your friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers know about this bill. It is so important that all people in Michigan have a right to choose.”

We suggest practicing what you say a few times. It will help you be as effective as possible.

Other things you can say:

“Most people across the state still have analog meters, which don’t present a threat. We’re simply asking the legislature to give people a choice.”

Hi, my name is _____. The utilities want us to use smart meters instead of the conventional meters we’ve been using for years. The problem with smart meter is, people are getting sick

Give them a flyer, and say to them, “Please tell your friends and family, neighbors and co-workers about this issue. It’s very important that all people in Michigan be given a choice.”

