

ADVOCATING UNDER A MAJORITY GOVERNMENT

Majority governments — especially second-term ones — frequently ignore public opinion and their own advisors. Despite this challenge, effective advocacy is entirely possible. CFUW and CFUW Ontario Council clubs possess well-entrenched skills to drive change using these core tenets:

- **Shift Public Opinion:** If politicians won't listen, change public minds. Hold meetings, panel discussions, forums, film nights, or tea parties celebrating political action (like the Famous Five's Persons Case).
- **Write to Newspapers:** Submit Letters to the Editor or Op-Eds. As a club, base it on policy and sign under the President's name. As an individual, use CFUW information, but do not use the CFUW name.
- **Lobby Leadership:** Write to your MPP, the Minister, and the Premier. Expect form letters, but volume matters. Expand numbers via your networks and always copy the opposition. (Follow the same club vs. individual signing rules as above.)
- **Collaborate:** Partner with another CFUW Ontario Council Club on shared issues to maximize reach and impact.
- **Listen and Learn:** Identify the real policymakers and influencers. Understand the core issue and prepare for the inevitable political pendulum swing.
- **Get Politically Involved:** Join a political party (three of them currently need help). CFUW is non-partisan, but highly political.
- **Run for Office:** Support fellow members, friends, and colleagues who run, or step up and run yourself.

(Thanks to Teri Shaw for these tenets.)

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5 WAYS TO ENGAGE GOVERNMENT

Adapted from CSAE Trillium for CFUW Ontario Council Clubs.

1. Direct Lobbying

Consistently meet with elected officials, public servants, and ministerial staff. Because officials handle hundreds of issues weekly, staying present ensures your club is top-of-mind for policy development and consultations.

2. Grassroots Advocacy

Engage at the local level. Politicians highly value meeting constituents. Arrange meetings at their local constituency offices or invite them to tour your local projects to demonstrate your sector's community impact firsthand.

3. Digital Advocacy

Leverage digital tools (like CSAE Digital Advocacy) to modernize letter-writing. One-click email campaigns quickly show elected officials that dozens or hundreds of local constituents care about an issue. Remember: all politics is local.

4. Media Relations

Use press conferences, press releases, and Op-Eds to build public awareness. Gaining media attention inevitably forces the government to pay attention to your cause.

5. Social Media

Politicians spend hours personally monitoring platforms like Twitter and Instagram. Use organic or paid campaigns to put your message directly in front of them, drive traffic to your digital advocacy campaigns, or amplify published news stories.