

# K2 Public Comment

## Strong, Fred

As the NLC representative to the National Association of Regional Councils Board of Directors I've been asked to talk a bit about the history of the organization as it relates to the NLC. In 1968 the NLC, together with NACO, created The National Service to Regional Councils organization. That organization was designed to serve relatively new agencies throughout the United States doing regional planning and/or transportation planning with the obligation of seeking funding for various transportation projects and/or operations. The organization changed its name to the National; Association of Regional Councils a few years later. Now known by the acronym NARC it functions in parallel with NLC and NACO at the Federal level. I currently serve also as its Transportation Policy Chairman. The organization depends upon my experience as a registered lobbyist in Washington, DC, for some of its leadership functions. With that experience, as well as my role on the Board of Directors of the second largest inter-city passenger rail service in the nation, I've been asked to suggest some of the best ways to lobby for your projects and funding in D.C Lobbying, or advocacy as it is sometimes called, is a combination of who you know, how well you know them and what you know. Who you know and work with as a team includes your neighboring jurisdictions as well as your elected representatives in D.C., their staff members, as well as the government employees involved in your areas of interest within the Federal Government.

Building those relationships is a primary function of yours when you are here or at other group functions involving them. Too many who come to these functions limit their effectiveness by staying comfortable by only associating with others from their own jurisdiction or area. They miss the opportunity to learn from more remote areas the types of problems they have faced and especially the ways in which they solved them. Those ways include what they did, how they did it and who their mentors or associates were in doing so. When I say "who" I'm including those they had to successfully deal with to get all its elements accomplished.

That takes me beyond your local jurisdictions and those people into the world of the Federal Government. You need elected officials to speak for you but you also need their staff members to give them the information and, perhaps, the words to use when doing so on your behalf. Staff will want their Congressman's or Senator's permission or direction to work with and for you. You must have that. Once you do, you can get the nuts and bolts done to accomplish the task. Remember, the electeds are primarily engaged in meetings, making speeches and working to get re-elected. Therefore, the more you can show a relationship between what you want and what they want, the more likely you are to get their support and assistance. The staff can get into the weeds for you but you have to give them enough basic information in the form of facts, not opinions, to make it beneficial to them in their goal of staying engaged and moving up. The Federal Employees, on the other hand, have the task of making it work in the most efficient, cost-effective way possible. They work in offices that are, in some cases, in designated office buildings for their agency, unmarked offices in the basement of the Capitol or in the field with those whose information or expertise they need to accomplish their tasks.

Here are just a few tips that touch the tip of the iceberg of lobbying knowledge. It's impossible to tell you everything I've learned in over half a century in the time allocated. If you want more contact me after the meeting and I'll arrange some more time with you.

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Minimize your time in the elected's office. He or she is being pulled in many directions during office hours, Learn where he or she likes to socialize after hours, have a beverage, dinner or what special treat they like to get after work, If you can meet them there and make it worth their while by treating them or helping them in some way do so. If you arrange that you can usually have some relatively private, uninterrupted time with them to accomplish your purpose. In some cases you can get more than one of them to join you and increase your effectiveness in a shorter amount of time and effort.

In the case of Federal staff, if you learn who's behind which unmarked door in the Capitol and you walk in knowing where you are you'll find your reception to be extremely welcome and productive. Knowledge is your most important tool. However, it's important to state both the good and the bad side of the story regarding what you are asking for in order to retain your welcome in any of the offices. If you don't and they get burned you won't be welcome anymore.

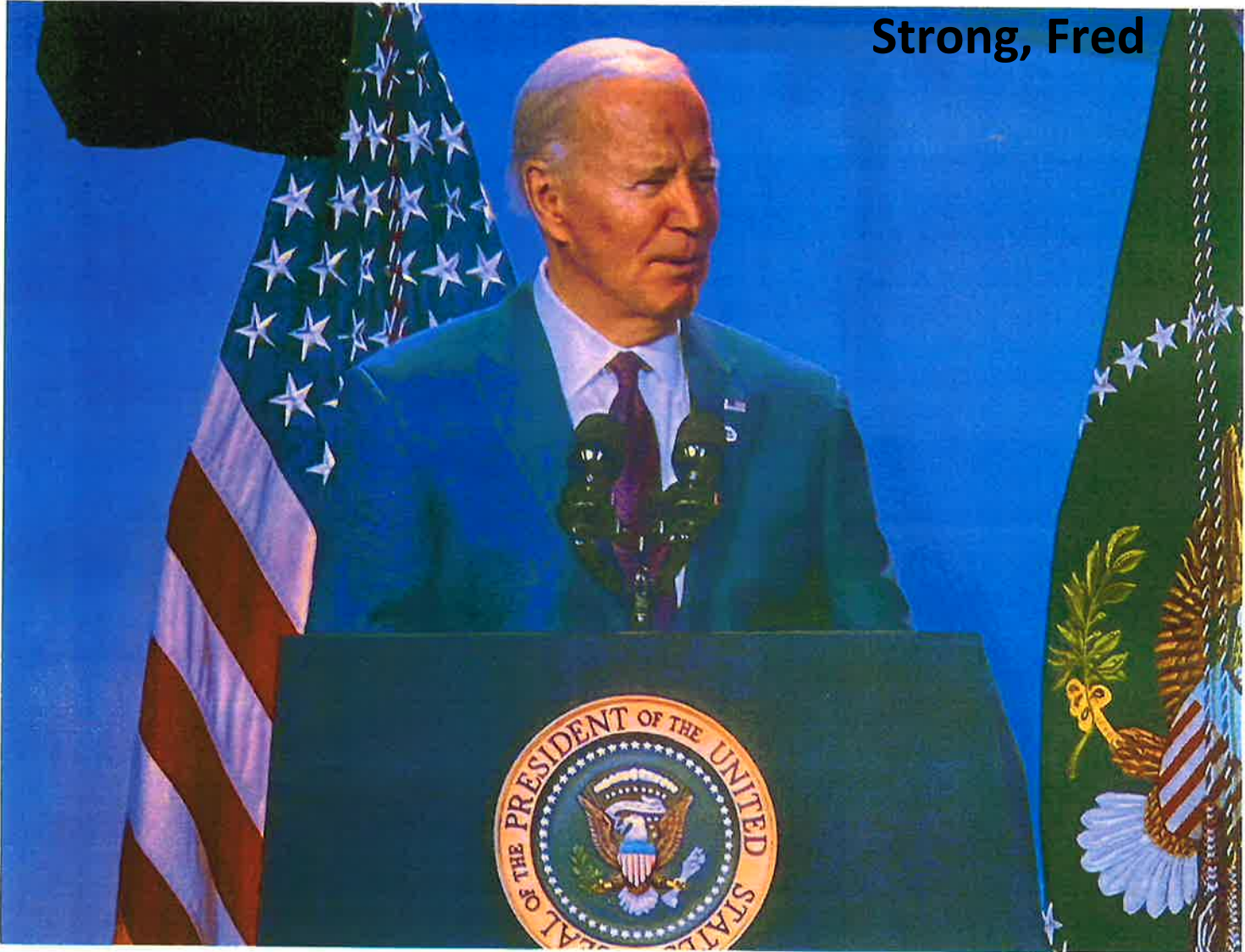
Remember, learn ... build alliances ... be aware of conserving everyone's time and effort ... and, whatever you do ... don't be shy ... but be honest!

Thank you and remember to make your time here worth the cost to your constituents and to you!

Now, I do have time for one or two questions.

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