

# Lockhart Logic

## Great (*legislative*) thoughts from Speaker Lockhart\*

Credibility is a non-renewable resource: once gone, it is gone. Expect the worst and plan accordingly. You can never win an argument with a legislator .never! A legislator and his ego are never parted. Never criticize a legislator –especially in print. Never say “never,” except for the preceding statement. Organizations have egos too. It is better to convert an opponent than it is to gain a supporter. If it costs money, it is in trouble. If it saves money, it will probably be in trouble too. If you can’t defeat a bill, dilute it; if you can’t dilute it, delay it. Getting mad at someone is a luxury you can’t afford. Do not threaten. Promise only what you can deliver. Help those who help you. It is better to look for a key to a locked door than it is to try to beat the door down. Persistence wins. If you want to know, ask. Constituents make the best lobbyists. Fear and/or greed generate most legislation. Everything is temporary. Be nice to your enemies; tomorrow they may be your friends. Be willing to forgive, but not to forget. A lobbyist (professional) is someone to blame when things go wrong. Necessity is the mother of strange bedfellows. Coalitions are temporary love affairs, seldom consummated or even blissful, and they frequently lead to seductions by clever suitors. The merits of an issue are seldom enough. No bill should be called before its’ time, Legislation is not only the art of compromise, compromise is also an art. A good lobbyist learns something new every day. A lobbyist has no job security. Repealing a law is usually more difficult than passing a new one. “Mandate” is a dirty word. It is almost impossible to keep a legislative secret. Integrity is also power. Say “thank you” often (and mean it). Don’t take all of the credit, even if you think you deserve it. Commitments are important, but don’t count on them. Legislative rules are important, especially the unwritten ones. Legislation and political campaigns cannot be separated. Publicity is a tool of lobbying, not a substitute. Politics and war bring out the best and worst in people. There is no such thing as flawless legislation. About the only thing that can be guaranteed in legislation is that there are no guarantees.

\*Richard Lockhart, Speaker, Illinois Third House, 1981



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