

The Public Ought To Know

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By Corey Bearak

Time To Play Annoy!

A City budget done. A State legislative session over. Time to rest on one's laurels? Lick wounds? Assess results? Not the advice from this commentator. It makes more sense to begin early. Strategize. Build your coalitions. Reach out early to electeds, agency folk and their staffs.



I call the approach playing “Annoy!”. Its history goes back two decades to April 2, 1995 when the late Newsday columnist, Joe Queen and I collaborated on this game he ingeniously named in a column title “Rules to Play ‘Annoy’”). The purpose then was not to create a board game, but to encourage the public to request their slice of the city budget pie. Rather than wait for next year, no excuse exists not to start now.

A commentary in my recent ebook, *The Public Ought To Know*– aka the inspiration for these current Labor Press commentaries, notes that anyone can play “Annoy!”:

“Look around your community. Talk to neighbors. Does your community need a program? A project?” Same approach applies to legislation. Start early. Call or write your local city or state legislator on the law, policy, program or project. “Be persistent. Follow-up with the member's staff. Meet with your legislator. Ask your legislator about the program or project you advocate at community meetings.”

And this becomes key: “Enlist others in your cause: neighbors, your local civic, house of worship, the PTA, the local political club, your community board.” And on the more “global” issues, reach out to like-minded colleague in labor and advocacy groups. *The Public Ought To Know* includes several examples of how to successfully play “Annoy!”

Don't get upset if you don't win at “Annoy!” “A new game starts – immediately – as a game ends. The more you play, the better you get.

***Corey Bearak can be reached at StrategicPublicPolicy.com. Find his ebook, *The Public Ought To Know*, at Kindle, Nook and Apple iBooks.**