

TIPS for MEETING

with your CONGRESSPERSON



- 1. Be Prepared:** You can help ensure a positive meeting by taking time to prepare.
 - Take some time to learn about the legislative priority issues and study the talking points. Reflect upon why those issues are important to you, and if you have any personal stories you could share during the meeting.
 - Learn about your legislator’s positions by reviewing past votes and statements on the issues, and try to anticipate what kind of questions the legislator will ask and/or reasons the legislator may already support/oppose your asks. It helps to have responses prepared for opposing arguments and tying the issues into how they affect your local community.
 - Identify who will speak about each topic, identify important roles: someone to introduce the group, timekeeper, note taker, and someone to say ‘thank you’ at the end of the meeting.
- 2. Respect Their Time:** Your legislators and their staff have packed schedules, so make sure to show up on time, stay on your points, and keep the meeting concise.
- 3. Make Clear Requests For Action:** For each issue you address, include a clear, actionable request for the legislator. For example, “We’d like the Senator to support x bill.” If you are not able to meet the Congressperson directly, relay the “ask” to the staff member. The staff plays an invaluable role in shaping a legislator's agenda and position on issues.
- 4. Stay Honest and Positive:** Be positive, friendly and thankful to your legislator and the staff with whom you meet. It is common for a legislator to be late or interrupted, so remain calm and flexible. You may not agree with the legislator’s stances on issues; remain respectful, but convey your talking points. Most importantly **do not** make up facts or stories; it is okay to say you do not know an answer to a question or offer to follow-up with an answer via email.
- 5. Follow-up:** After the meeting send a thank you letter to the legislator expressing your appreciation for their time and any support they showed you during the meeting. Send additional information if you promised to do so.

It’s helpful to think of this meeting as the beginning of a relationship, so stay in touch with your legislator and track their responses to the issues! If the legislator takes action, express your gratitude. If the legislator does not take action ask for an explanation.

- 6. Share your Experience:** Don’t forget to take a photo, send a “Thank You” Tweet with it, write a blog post, etc.