



Tips on Meeting with Your Elected Official

The following tips were written for communicating with Representatives and Senators, but they are helpful guidelines to remember when you are meeting with anyone you hope to persuade or inform.

- o Present your case. Explain what you want your Legislator to do and why.
- o Give examples of the impact proposed legislation will have on your home state or district.
- o If you do not know the answer to a question, offer to find out and send information back to the office. Make yourself available as a resource person.
- o Do not expect members of the State Legislature to be specialists; their schedule and workload make them generalists – open, we hope, to listening.
- o Do not confront, threaten, pressure or beg.
- o Keep control of the visit. Do not be put off by smokescreens or long-winded answers. Your appointment time is limited.
- o Do not make promises you cannot deliver.
- o Find out if your Legislator has heard opposing views. If so, find out what the arguments are and what groups are involved. Find out if there are other key Representatives or Senators you should contact. Ask for your Legislator's assistance in accomplishing your goals.
- o Spend time with your Legislator even if his or her position is different from yours. Sometimes you can lessen the intensity of opposition.
- o Leave a brief opposition paper or fact sheet in the office when you leave.
- o Follow up every visit with a thank you note and share your reflections on what you felt about the meeting
- o Evaluate the meeting: What went well, what happened and what did not happen.