



How to Visit Your Legislator

Make an Appointment:

- Call or e-mail your legislator's home office or his/her office in the capital.
- Ask the legislator or a staff member to arrange a time and place, either in the capital or in your legislator's home office. Be as flexible as possible.
- Identify the participants and the subject you would like to discuss.
- Request that the assistant who handles the issue be in attendance as well.

Be Prepared:

- Know what you want to say and the facts that support your viewpoint. Emphasize the importance of the issue, how it affects you, your community and your state.
- Know the facts, including the bill number, title and status.
- Use relevant facts and research to support your views. When possible, prepare a one page fact sheet to leave with the legislator outlining your views on the issue and the impact it will have.
- Present your views politely, but with commitment. Be persuasive and concise.
- Discuss the positive or negative impact of the legislation. Each should be approached differently.

Some Tips:

- Be on time. Be certain to reach your appointment on time, or a few minutes early.
- Be confident. Focus on the issue. Let your enthusiasm and concern win out over any shyness.
- Be firm. Find out exactly where your legislator stands on the issue. Ask what action he or she intends to take. Don't be afraid to ask for specifics.
- Be brief. Since legislators have extremely busy schedules, plan on getting your message across in 5 minutes—10 at the very most. Don't get sidetracked by small talk. Make your time really count.
- Listen carefully. Be ready to answer questions clearly. If you don't know the answer to a question, do not make something up; admit that you don't know and send the answer later. Listen carefully to your representative's viewpoint, even if you disagree.

Follow Up:

- Follow up the meeting with a thank you letter to your legislator and to the staff member who helped with the arrangements.
- Include a summary of your position plus any other information that supports your views or answers any of their questions.

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