

THIRTEEN EASY STEPS TO AN EFFECTIVE VISIT WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR



1. Wear business attire.
2. Introduce yourself and tell your member or staff person what organization you represent, where the group is located and the size of its membership. If you are lobbying as an individual, make sure to mention that you're a constituent. If you have any family, social business or political ties to the legislator, mention them as well.
3. Start with a compliment. If possible, thank the member for a good stand he or she recently took on an issue and/or mention if you voted for the member. At a minimum, thank them for taking the time to meet with you.
4. Take the initiative by stating clearly and concisely what issue you want to discuss, what your position is on it and what action you want the member to take. Follow this with facts about why he or she should take your position.
5. Stress how the issue will affect the member's district or state, and if possible, tell a personal story which highlights your experience with the issue and why you care about it.
6. Give the legislator a brief fact sheet (1-2 pages max) which outlines your position, explains what the bill does (if there is one) and why he or she should support your viewpoint.
7. Mention any other organization, important individuals, government officials, and legislators which support your position. If you are a part of a large coalition, mention the number of members it has.

8. Be a good listener. After you make a pitch, allow the member to respond. However, bring the conversation back to the issue at hand if the member goes off on a tangent or tries to evade it.
9. Answer any questions to the best of your ability, but if you don't know the answer, admit it. Try to provide the information promptly in a follow-up letter.
10. Ask a direct question to which the legislator can respond "yes," such as, "Can we count on you to cosponsor this bill?" Press politely for a commitment, unless the member is clearly opposed to your position or to making a commitment.
11. Always thank the member for his or her time at the end of the meeting, even if he or she did not agree with your position.
12. Immediately after the meeting, write down any information you learned about the member's position or concerns so you can share it with others and use it to develop your legislative strategy.
13. Always follow up with a prompt thank you letter. In the letter, reiterate your key points and any commitments the member made to you. Include all follow-up information you promised to provide.