

Arrange a Meeting

Setting up a meeting at your legislator's office is a great way to build your relationship. Here are some tips for making your first meeting a success:

- Be considerate of your legislator's schedule and time constraints. If you are meeting in your legislator's office, he or she may only have 15 to 20 minutes to speak with you. You must be able to state your views succinctly in order to leave time for discussion.
- Be prepared (i.e., well-informed and well-organized). Understanding political issues is important, but your personal experience is a rich and persuasive asset.
- Be attentive to your legislator's views. Each encounter should be an exchange of ideas, rather than a lecture.
- Understand the basis of your legislator's views. They provide valuable insight into how you might support or change those views.
- Leave a one-page summary of your key points when the meeting is over.
- Follow up the meeting with a written thank-you note re-emphasizing your key points.
- Write a separate thank-you note to the staff members who helped arrange the meeting.
- Always send any information or materials you promise to provide.

For many reasons, you may end up meeting with a member of the office staff who handles the issue at hand. While you may be disappointed, don't be discouraged. Treat the meeting the same as planned, ask that your information be provided to the legislator and for him or her to follow up with you about the meeting.