



How to Effectively Communicate with Legislators

When addressing your legislator, use the following **protocol**:

- Senator: “Senator_____”
- Member of the House of Representatives: “Representative_____”
- Chairman or chairwoman “Chairman (last name), or Madam Chair “(last name)”

*More often than not, you will be meeting with a **staffer** from your legislator’s office. These individuals communicate directly with legislators and are a valuable audience to hear your concern or support for an issue. Extend them the same respect you would to your legislators.

Be Personal

- Introduce yourself- your name, where you are from, if you are representing yourself or an organization.
- Be sure to let them know if you are a **constituent**.
- Connect your talking points to your story; how a policy or bill may **impact** yourself, your family, clients, etc.

Provide Data

- If possible, provide at least one piece of **data** that supports your position, but keep it brief. Additional data or printed materials can always be left with staff or forwarded to the office later.

Be Focused

- Stick to main **talking points** and be conscious of time.
- Be polite, but gear the conversation back to your issue if it seems like the conversation is going off track.

Be Positive

- Avoid being argumentative. Your legislator may not agree with your position, but it is important to be professional and continue the dialogue.
- Do not be discouraged by tough questions. Legislators may ask you questions that will be asked of them. Provide solid information, or offer to follow up with additional information if you don’t know.
- Remember your **goal is to develop a long term relationship**.

Make the Ask

- **Ask your legislator to support your position** or a piece of legislation.
- Ask them if they have any other questions or need additional information.

Close the Meeting

- **Thank the legislator** and let them know you look forward to additional discussion in the future.

***Follow up** with a thank you note and/or any updates.