

Visiting Legislators in Their Home District

Most legislators travel to their home districts fairly often--on weekends, if possible, and when Congress is not in session. They go home, in part, to meet with constituents either individually or in town meetings. You can set up a meeting with your Representative or Senator during one of these visits or attend a town meeting forum to ask a question about your issues -- a great way to educate others in the issue.

To prepare for the meeting:

- Arrange for a small group of people who share your concerns to participate in the meeting.
- Decide ahead of time what the group will say and who will speak on each issue.
- Limit your visit to one, or at most two, topics.
- Decide in advance what you hope to get out of the meeting--an agreement to sponsor a particular bill. Remember the Golden Rule--treat the Member as you would like to be treated if you were in his or her shoes.

During the meeting:

- Present your case. Explain what you want your legislator to do and why.
- Give examples of the impact the proposed legislation will have on your home state or district.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, don't make it up. Offer to find out and send information back to the office later.
- Leave the fact sheet, and position paper, and copy of the bill with the member when you leave.
- Follow up your visit with a thank you note.

You can also invite your elected officials to participate in your organization's activities. You might ask them to address your group or present them with an award. These events leave a lasting, positive impression about the organization and build a relationship with the legislator that can be useful.