



MEETING WITH A LEGISLATOR: TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Know your Legislators.

- **Know who your local legislators are and on what committees they serve.**

For a searchable listing of senators and representatives, visit the following Web sites and spend some time educating yourself about legislators who affect your area and/or your cause. Both sites offer links on their main pages to find your local senator or representative.

www.flsenate.gov
Ken Pruitt, President

www.myfloridahouse.gov
Marco Rubio, Speaker

If you don't have access to the Internet, additional information can be found by calling the Legislative Information Center at **1-800-342-1827**.

- **Establish with whom you'd like to speak and utilize the following tips to maximize the effectiveness of your conversation.**

Make an Appointment.

- **Call your legislator's office.**

The direct number to both the local office and Capitol office should be available online at the sites listed above.

- **Set up an appointment.**

Explain that you are a constituent in the legislator's area who would like to set up a brief appointment with your elected official. Always get the name of the staff person ("aide" or "staffer") with whom you speak, and use it as a reference point in the future if necessary.

If you have not set up an appointment, it may be possible to have a quick meeting anyway; stop by your legislator's office, explain to an available staffer that you live in the legislator's district and ask if the legislator has a few minutes to talk.

Note: Understand that legislators are constantly meeting with constituents, other legislators, lobbyists and a multitude of other people. It is realistic to expect to spend only five to ten minutes with your legislator.

Have a Game Plan.

- **Be prepared.**
- **Know your key messages.**
- **Rehearse what you would like to say and the issues you wish to discuss.**
- **Speak with pride and confidence.**

Show the legislator why you believe in the issue/cause.

Have an Effective Discussion.

- **Take a deep breath. Relax.**
- **Introduce yourself as a constituent.**
- **Thank the legislator for taking the time to meet with you.**
- **Be personable and professional.**
- **Know your facts and tell your story.**
- **Identify your affiliated organization and explain its mission *briefly*.**
- **State your purpose.**

Be clear about what legislation you are supporting/opposing. Convey your position concisely and explain why you are asking him/her to vote for that position. Use personal examples, if possible.

- **Identify yourself and your organization as an expert.**

Explain that your organization has a wealth of information and expertise on the subject, and that you/it can be a valuable resource to him/her if needed.

- **Give the legislator a chance to explain his/her perspective on the issue.**
- **Ask if any supplemental information is needed.**
- **Politely let him/her know that you plan to stay in touch.**

Leave an Impression.

- **Leave behind information.**

If possible, leave behind concise but useful material that will remind the legislator of your visit and act as a resource for him/her after you have gone. A pocket card or fact sheet, for instance, are effective and memorable leave-behinds.

Thank your Legislator.

- **Write a thank you note to your legislator.**

Thank them again for their time and reiterate your position succinctly and politely.

Remember to use the correct salutation
(e.g., Dear Senator Smith, Dear Representative Williams, etc.)

- **Identify the bill.**

If there is a particular bill of concern, reference the bill's popular name and Senate or House file number (reference both, just in case the number is incorrect).

- **Note your appreciation and support.**

Elected officials often hear from people who are vehemently against something. A little kindness and etiquette can go a long way.

Good Luck! 😊