

Tips for Meeting with Your Elected Officials

When meeting with legislators and candidates, these tips will help you maximize the impact your message and make the most of every minute you spend with elected officials and those seeking office. Equally, there are more than a few pitfalls to make certain you avoid.

Do:

- Know your issue inside and out
- Develop talking points before the meeting to make certain you stay on message
- Clearly identify yourself as a constituent
- State your credentials as an industry expert
- Ask for specific legislative action or support
- Provide reliable data or fact sheets
- Be positive and friendly
- Be sensitive about time since meetings are often cut short
- Treat staff with the same level of respect as you do the official
- Compliment the member or staff on positive actions
- Admit if you don't know an answer, but promise to follow up
- Leave your name and contact information
- Send a thank you note
- Follow up with any additional information needed

Don't:

- Arrive without an appointment
- Be late
- Miss a valuable opportunity to meet with staff members if your legislator is unable to keep your appointment or cuts your time short
- Be confrontational or overly partisan
- Try to discuss more than one issue
- Get too comfortable or casual
- Forget to use proper forms of address

