

Meeting with a Lawmaker

Make an appointment. You cannot expect to see a politician without an appointment. Even with an appointment, the politician may have to leave early to vote. You will probably end up meeting with an assistant (“staffer”) instead, but do not take that personally. Actually, staffers often have “the ear” of the politician on issues they’re convinced are important.

Prepare points to go over. Have a short list of items you’d like to talk about. You may even give the list to the politician. Prepare your presentation.

Give the politician charts, flyers, links to websites, social media, and printed information on the subject. Select a few key supporting materials that help make your case, but don’t overwhelm the politician or staffer with a pile of materials.

Stay on task. You might find the conversation drifting onto other subjects. Politely try to guide it back on course.

Dress appropriately. First impressions are important. Show them that you want to be taken seriously. Dress like you are going to an important school event.

Finish your conversation by asking for a commitment. “Can we count on your support?”

Express thanks and send a thank-you note. No matter how it goes, thank the lawmaker or staffer for his or her time and send a thank-you note or email after your meeting. (Tip: Hand-written thank-you notes sent by regular mail make more of an impression.)



