



Soapbox Meeting Tips for Advocates

Hook, Line, and Sinker: The Three Parts of an Effective Legislative Meeting

Hook (your geography)

Everyone should briefly introduce themselves at the start of the meeting. This is your chance to remind the legislator that you are constituents. Consider sharing a few unique details to underscore the fact that your group represents a broad cross-section from the district.

Line (why you care - story and/or statistics)

Provide the legislator with local stories or a strong argument. Lawmakers especially appreciate real-life examples that put a face on an issue.

Sinker (our unified request)

Stay on message! Make a clear request of the legislator or the staff. Ask for a commitment, and then listen carefully to the response. Legislative offices often need some time to consider supporting or opposing legislation. Remember to thank them before you leave.

Common Pitfalls to Avoid in Face-to-Face Meetings with Elected Officials

Don't fail to show up – Keeping your meeting conveys professionalism and confidence. (Keep in mind that your legislators might be late to meetings, and remain flexible!)

Don't address unrelated issues – Addressing a variety of issues makes it difficult for your legislator to guess your priorities and diminishes the importance of your primary issue. Keep the agenda focused. Your group's power stems from being able to deliver the same unified message in many legislative offices.

Don't engage in excessive praise or scorn – You have scheduled a meeting as a credible source of information from the district. Don't distract legislators from that role by being either overly complimentary or verbally abusive.

Don't lie or bluff – If you don't know the answer to a question that your representative asks, you do not need to make up an answer. Tell them you will get back to them with the requested information and then ask your national or statewide group to follow-up.

Don't discount a meeting with staff – Staff can be your best ally within the legislative office. Don't treat them dismissively.

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