

SUGGESTIONS FOR A PERSONAL VISIT

Meeting with a member of the legislature or legislative staff is a very effective way to convey a message about a specific issue or legislative matter.

PLAN CAREFULLY: Be clear about what it is you want to achieve; determine in advance which member or committee staff you need to meet with to achieve your purpose.

BE PROMPT and PATIENT: When it is time to meet with a member, be punctual and be patient. It is not uncommon for a legislator to be late, or to have a meeting interrupted due to their crowded schedule. If interruptions do occur, be flexible. When the opportunity presents itself, continue your meeting with staff.

BE PREPARED: Whenever possible, bring to the meeting information and materials supporting your position. Members are required to take positions on many different issues. In some instances, a member may lack important details about the pros and cons of a particular matter. It is helpful to share information and examples that demonstrate clearly the impact or benefits associated with a particular issue or piece of legislation.

BE POLITICAL: Legislative members want to represent the best interests of their district or state. Whenever possible, demonstrate the connection between what you are requesting and the interests of the member's constituency. If possible, describe how your group can assist to him/her. When appropriate, remember to ask for a commitment.

BE RESPONSIVE: Be prepared to answer questions or provide additional information in the event the member expresses interest or asks questions. Follow up the meeting with a thank-you letter that outlines the different points covered during the meeting and send along any additional information and materials requested.

REMEMBER: Members of the legislature rely heavily on their staff. Staff assists the legislators in fact finding, meetings in the district, and working with other members of their caucus. Staff members are very important – to you and to the legislator. Treat them with respect. Follow up with staff as you would the legislator. They are your messengers to the legislative member. Be polite at all times.