

MEETING WITH LEGISLATORS

MOMS *for*
★ LIBERTY ★

THE PURPOSE

There is quite possibly no better way to build relationships and win support for an issue than sitting down with those elected to represent you. It may not be an instantaneous process; but open, honest, and kind dialogue builds bridges. It is often easier than you think to get a meeting with your state legislators.

SCHEDULING A MEETING

- Schedule in advance, avoid just dropping in.
- Call their office and ask for the person who handles the legislator's schedule, this is usually a secretary.
- State your name, if you are a constituent, and what you wish to discuss with the legislator.
- Be prepared to provide suggested meeting times.
- It can be easier to get a meeting when they are not in session and are in the district.
- Follow up with an email, either restating the request or confirming what you scheduled. Include the scheduler and the legislator on the email.

BEFORE THE MEETING

- Prepare. It is important to be knowledgeable about all sides of an issue you wish to discuss so you are prepared to answer any questions that may arise.
- Determine your objective. Do you need their vote, information, or for them to sponsor a bill?
- You may opt to send over information in advance of the meeting, but limit it to a single page.
- If you plan on leaving information with the legislator after the meeting, limit it to no more than 5 pages.
- Determine your talking points and prioritize them.
- Decide who will attend with you, normally 2-3 attendees is best. Determine who will say what.

DURING THE MEETING

- Be on time and pack your patience. Legislators may be late and encounter frequent interruptions.
- Make brief introductions then get right to the point.
- Stick to the allotted time, normally between 10-20 minutes.
- Listen carefully and ask questions for understanding.
- Stay on message and communicate clearly.
- Provide accurate information, be honest if you do not know the answer to something you are asked.
- Stories stick- share examples of how the issue you are discussing impacts you or others.
- Thank them for their time.
- Reiterate and write down any commitments you or the legislator makes, i.e. to follow up on something.
- Don't be afraid to boldly ask for what you need.
- Set timelines for commitments.
- Always be kind and exemplify the attributes of a joyful warrior, consider how your actions reflect on our movement.

AFTER THE MEETING

- Each attendee should promptly send a handwritten thank you.
- Follow through with any commitments you made.
- Follow up on their commitments.
- Continue to find ways to build on the relationship.

A NOTE ABOUT STAFF

Legislative staff are crucial to the legislator's success and they can be to yours as well. Always treat them with kindness and respect. Acknowledge them by name and consider including them in thank you notes. At times, you will meet with the staff only.