

COMMUNICATING



with *Congress*

Tips for Attending Town Hall Meetings

Be Prepared. Come with thoughtful arguments, good data, and persuasive stories. This will help you be remembered.

Tell a Personal Story. Members of Congress are always looking for firsthand accounts of the impact that policies have on their constituents. Think in advance how a policy might affect you, your family, business, or community.

Use Numbers If You Have Them. Let the legislator know how many more people you represent. Use numbers by saying things like, “I have 50 employees,” or “I represent 100 people in my union.”

Be Respectful. It doesn’t matter if you’re talking to your grocer or a public official – starting any conversation with another person in a rude manner is not a very effective way to persuade them.

Bring Colleagues. Attending in large numbers is a good way to get attention and send a “listen to us” message that is sure to be heard. Coordinate your story before the meeting (also ask a public questions during the meeting).

Talk to Every Staffer. If you can make sure to introduce yourself to every staffer who is present at the town hall and get their business cards.

Leave Paper or Email Your Issue Stance. Any documents passed to state-based staff will likely be shared with the Legislative Assistant in Washington who covers your issue.

Follow Up. Use this as an opportunity to present yourself as an expert on your issues. An elected official often responds to an individual who just follows up with a phone call a few weeks after attending a meeting.

Get Your People to Multiple Meetings. Repetition and hearing the same message in different places throughout the district reinforces the importance of your issue to the legislator and staff members.

Demonstrate That You’re Not Going Away. If you continue to show your presence at town hall meetings, the legislator must deal with you, if only to avoid an uncomfortable encounter at a future town hall meeting.

Questions? Contact our Legislative Staff at 202-898-2816

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