

IBTTA's Tips for Meeting With Your U.S. Representative and Senators

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Write, and then call ahead of time for an appointment.

Don't feel intimidated by the legislator. Most likely, you are more of an expert on your subject than the legislator. Be confident.

Be personable. Begin your meeting by complimenting the Senator or Representative on legislation that he or she has written or supported. This will set a pleasant tone for the rest of your meeting.

Be knowledgeable of your subject and organized in your presentation. Show that you are a credible authority on your topic and keep your pitch concise. Remember to emphasize how the issue affects those in your community. For instance, infrastructure investment is a national issue with local ramifications.

Be open to questions. Be an active listener and answer the legislator's questions with accurate facts. If you're unsure about an answer, offer to look into the matter and call back.

Don't allow the legislator to divert from a subject matter. If he or she attempts to evade your question, tactfully ask for an answer and how the Senator or Representative plans to vote on the issue.

Have perseverance when your legislator seems unsupportive of your cause. Respond to any hostility by providing arguments to opponent's questions. This may require you to do some additional research before you meet with your legislator.

Emphasize that the legislator's constituency supports what you are advocating. The fact that an issue is important to his/her constituents will most likely prompt the Senator or Representative to make your goals part of his/her agenda.

Ask for a commitment. Find out exactly how the Senator or Representative will further your cause. But do not press for a commitment if your legislator is clearly opposed to your views.

Be willing to meet with a staff person if the legislator is unavailable. A staffer is able to inform the Senator or Representative of your views and relay your concerns.

Write a follow-up thank you letter, reiterating the main points made during your meeting.

For additional information, contact Neil Gray, IBTTA's Director of Government Affairs at 202-659-4620 or neilgray@ibtta.org.

"There are no free roads."TM