

Tips for Meeting with your Legislators

Meeting in person with your legislators is a great way to cultivate relationships, personalize your message, and ensure that your legislators know exactly where you stand on a particular issue.

Schedule an Appointment. It's best to do this either over the phone or via email.

Dress appropriately. Treat this meeting as any other that requires a professional appearance.

Come Prepared. Have an outline or a mini-script of what you intend to discuss with the legislator. If necessary, do research so that you know the subject, its relevancy to current legislation, and your legislator's position on the issue. [Click here](#) to learn more about the CBF's priority federal, state, and local issues and advocacy efforts.

Bring Written Materials. Bring written materials with you to leave behind with elected officials and their staff. Make sure to include appropriate contact information.

Be on time. Legislators have tight schedules. If you cannot avoid being late, call the office to alert them.

Identify yourself by giving your name and address.

Relax. If you are nervous, relax and treat the meeting like any other business meeting.

Be brief. Clearly and concisely state your position and make your points. Limit your meeting to one to three issues.

Identify the legislation. Make sure you identify the legislation you are discussing by name and number, or by its sponsors. If the legislator or staff person is not familiar with the legislation, provide him or her with a brief summary.

Ask for a viewpoint and vote. Find out the legislator's views on each piece of legislation, and ask for a commitment to vote for or against each piece of legislation.

Don't argue. It is ineffective to engage in an argument with the legislator or staff person about the issue(s). You will be more likely to get your message across by keeping your cool, and your conversation clear and succinct.

Be courteous, direct and fair. Don't be discouraged if you speak with a staff person. Most legislative aides are very reliable in relaying the messages and are knowledgeable about the issues. Conduct the conversation as you would with the legislator.

Follow up. Send a thank you note to the legislator or staff person. Although listening to citizen views is part of their jobs, this is a courtesy and a great opportunity to briefly restate your position in writing.

Be positive. Positive meetings with legislator can be very helpful.

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