

HOW TO MEET WITH YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

There are several opportunities to influence the legislative process by supporting an issue or bill that you care about. One of the most effective ways to do this is by meeting with your members of Congress or their staff in Washington, D.C., and in-state (or virtually!). While it's possible you won't speak directly to the member of Congress, your care for the issue will get back to their team in some form. Legislative staffers track when and how constituents provide their thoughts about a certain issue or bill and use this information to decide whether the member of Congress should support, oppose, or pay attention going forward.

HERE'S A QUICK GUIDE TO GET STARTED:

1

DECIDE WHOSE CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE(S) YOU WANT TO MEET WITH AND FIND THEIR CONTACT INFORMATION.

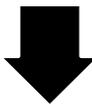


The first step is deciding which member(s) of Congress you want to speak to. Offices weigh feedback from constituents more heavily than from others. This is especially helpful if your member of Congress is on a committee that oversees the issue, where they have a real say about policy. The office will be more likely to schedule a meeting with you if you're a constituent!

Occasionally, a campaign may ask you to reach out to a member that is not yours, like if a particular member is holding up a vote or needs support for their legislative proposal.

TIP:

Not sure who your members of Congress are? You can look up your elected officials at [sojo.net/Elected Officials](https://sojo.net/ElectedOfficials).



2

CONTACT THE MEMBER OF CONGRESS' OFFICE(S) TO SCHEDULE A MEETING.

Most legislators will include a "Request Meeting" form or an email address to schedule a meeting on their webpage. Fill out the form or send them an email to schedule the meeting. If sending an email, make sure to include the following:

- Your name and identify yourself as a constituent (if applicable)
- The issue you would like to discuss and why it is important to you and/or your community. If relevant, you can ask to speak with the legislative assistant or correspondent that works on the issue.
- The location of the office you want to visit
- The dates that you're available to meet



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Sample email to schedule a meeting

Dear [Congressperson/Senator] [Last Name],

My name is [your name] and I live in your [district/state]. I am writing to request a meeting with you and your staff to discuss [issue] [If applicable, your relation to the issue].

I will be available to meet with you at your [location] office on [dates you are available], and I would love the opportunity to speak with you about these issues. I look forward to hearing back from you regarding a time we can meet. Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

[Your Name]

[Your Address, or other information identifying you as a constituent]

[Optional: Phone Number]

TIP:

Depending on what time of year it is, members of Congress will be in either in their home state/district during recess or in Washington, D.C., during a legislative session or committee work period. You can find this information on the Congressional Calendar or on the members' webpages. While you can request a meeting both locally and in Washington, D.C., the best time to meet is while they are in their local offices.

TIP:

If you haven't heard back from the scheduler within a couple of days, you can follow up by calling their office or sending an additional email. If you are calling, be sure to find the phone number for the specific office you requested to meet. Ask for the person in charge of scheduling appointments and repeat the same information you included in your form submission or email.

TIP:

You can also confirm your appointment the day before your meeting. If anyone is joining you for the meeting, be sure to mention this and whether they're constituents.

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3 PREPARE WHAT YOU WANT TO SAY.

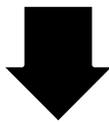
No need to prepare a full presentation! Remember that at the end of the day, this is a conversation with someone who wants to listen to what you have to say — and it's also the main part of their job! It will be helpful to think through the basic points you want to get across before visiting. Make sure you know how to describe: 1) the issue you plan to discuss, and 2) what you would like the legislator to do.

You can also think about points to support your position, such as personal or professional experience with the issue. It can also be helpful to bring in resources to help support your issue, like a one-pager, but this isn't always necessary.



TIP:

A large part of being a person of faith is living into the "already-but-not-yet." Our work toward beloved community is a small, but marvelous glimpse of what is to come. While we are fighting against injustice, it is important to remind ourselves and others — including our member of Congress — what it is that we are working toward. While you are preparing your thoughts, reflect on what it is that God is doing in your life and communities, and how your member of Congress may be encouraged and invited into this work if they are not already.



4 MEET WITH YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS' OFFICE!



TIP:

- Check out the security protocols and map of the building you're visiting. If the building is large, such as those in Washington, D.C., be sure to wear walkable shoes (or bring some in your bag)!
- Plan to be there early. Review the agenda with all those who will be present in the meeting before going in. Don't forget to take some deep breaths! You got this!
- Following the meeting, send a thank you letter or email to your member of Congress and/or the staff that you met with! This is a great opportunity to reiterate your issue, send follow-up resources, and form a relationship with their office.

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If you've never spoken to someone from a member of Congress' office before — or even if you have — it's common to be somewhat anxious. The policymaking process can seem daunting, but at the end of the day, it's important to remember that your representative and senators are meant to represent you. It's part of their duty as an elected official to meet with constituents and listen to their concerns.

While it takes a little more effort than calling, speaking with the member of Congress' office in-person (or via video call) can help make your issue more memorable to legislators — and can start a relationship for the long haul. As a community member and person of faith, your perspective is extremely valuable!



We also want to hear about your experience meeting with your members of Congress. Share it with us on social media [@SojoAction](#) or via email at sojoaction@sojo.net!

Not sure how to get started? Looking for a community of faith that cares deeply about justice and works to build a better world together? Join the Faith-Rooted Advocates Network! Learn more at sojo.net/FRAN.