



The Lobby Visit!

Tips for a Successful Lobby Visit

1. Arrive early, but don't expect the leader or staffer to arrive on time. Allow time for small talk at the outset, but not too much. Remember, it's your visit. You are there to build a relationship!
2. Make sure everyone in the group introduces themselves and shares any special connections they may have with the elected official (i.e. we go to the same Church or we both have an affinity for the Oakland As).
3. Explain to the elected official/staffer why you asked for the meeting.
4. Listen well: Much of lobbying is listening, looking for indications of the leader's views, and finding opportunities to provide good information. If you are meeting with a "silent type," draw her/him out by asking questions. If you are confronted with a "long-winded type," look for openings to bring her/him back to the point. Remember: your goal is to get your elected representatives to give you a firm answer to our asks.
5. Present your concerns simply and directly. Get to your "bottom line" immediately. Be brief, direct, courteous and positive. When presenting each issue, do not assume that your legislator has any prior knowledge of the subject.
6. Do not fight with your legislator or staff members. Politely answer questions and concerns, but if you disagree, make your point and move on. Remember, you are meeting with the member or staff person to inform him/her about your positions on issues.
7. If you do not know the answer to a question, say so, and promise to get back with the answer. Be sure to follow up with your answer as quickly as possible after the meeting.
8. Stay away from jargon and acronyms. Remember that your legislator deals with dozens, if not hundreds, of issues each week, and that 9 times out of 10 you know far more than the person you are meeting with on immigration issues. Be sure to be clear and never assume that something is easily understood.
9. Have a clear ask! If your legislator already is very supportive, ask him or her to cosponsor the relevant bill and/or take a leadership role in moving the bill through the process, getting additional cosponsors, or other ways.

Follow Up After the Meeting

1. Send a note thanking the member or staff person for meeting with you. Briefly summarize the main points of the meeting. Remember you're build a relationship
2. Remember to follow up with responses to any questions the member or staff person asked but you could not answer at the time.
3. Let AILA Advocacy know how the meeting went by clicking here:
<http://capwiz.com/aila2/lrm/feedback.tt>