



## In-district meetings with your representative

U.S. representatives regularly return to their home districts to stay engaged with their constituents. While they are home, there are multiple ways you can engage them on your policy issue priorities.

### Identify your issue

- Decide who you want to participate in the meeting and why you want to have it.
- A group (usually no more than five attendees) may make a meeting with a legislator more likely.

### Arranging for a meeting

- Locate the state/district office closest to you. One way to do this is by linking to your representative's webpage, starting from a lookup tool such as [www.govtrack.us](http://www.govtrack.us).
- Find out when your legislator will be in town. The information may be on the website, or you can use contact information on the website to call and ask.
- Request a meeting. Key times can be: 1) when your representative is available; and/or 2) during a key time for your policy issue. Before calling:
  - Have multiple date and time options prepared.
  - Know the issue you want to discuss and tell the scheduler.
  - Be aware that the scheduler may combine your visit with that of several constituents raising the same issue.
  - Note that you may be meeting with a staff member. This does not diminish the value of the meeting. This person is tasked with relaying content.
- Call again three days later to confirm that your appointment has been scheduled.

### Prepare for the meeting

#### Know your legislator

- Research beforehand which committees or issues your legislator regularly works on, and predict where he or she might stand on your issue. Your state public policy office (find a list on the [ELCA Advocacy resource page](#)) or ELCA Advocacy staff can help.



### What's on your mind and heart?

"[The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America] must unite realism and vision, wisdom and courage, in its social responsibility. It needs constantly to discern when to support and when to confront society's cultural patterns, values, and powers." — *Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective*, page 3

*Through advocacy ministry, we can stand up for policies that create opportunities to end hunger, overcome poverty, promote peace and dignity, advance racial and gender justice, and preserve God's creation in systemic, long-lasting ways.*

*Reflect prayerfully on issues and experiences that impact you, your community, and/or a ministry of your congregation, or that are a [priority of ELCA Advocacy this year](#). Your advocacy on that issue could spark important action.*

## Prepare for the Meeting continued...

- If you think your legislator may be resistant to your request, anticipate and research what arguments or statistics might be presented so that you aren't caught off-guard.

## Know what you want

- Pick one or two very specific issues that concern you.
- Strategize how the legislator can help resolve the issue. This could include being a champion or supporting a specific piece of legislation or a specific funding level.

## Know the legislator's time constraints

- His or her schedule may be extremely busy. Be prepared for a short meeting.

## Know the impression you're making

- If attending with a group, think through roles to play. Pick one person to introduce the group, and ensure that each person makes only one key point.
- Bring one or two news reports, fact sheets or other materials that you might leave behind to summarize your request.

## The Meeting

### Getting started

- Dress appropriately and be on time. Arriving early will assure your punctuality and allow you to review your key points.
- Introduce yourself and/or the group, including: 1) where you come from, and 2) who you represent.
- Thank the legislator or staff member for agreeing to meet.
- Share the reason for your visit. Start the conversation with a personal story or a fact sheet.

### Core of the meeting

- Make a clear, specific request of the legislator.
- Ask where the legislator stands on an issue or what he or she has done on the issue. This is a fair and answerable question.
- Listen. Be ready to encourage or politely push back if necessary.
- Ask your legislator to specify what he or she will do to address your issue in the future. If he or she is already supportive, future action could include championing the issue and encouraging other legislators to do the same.

### The lighter side

- Stay on topic. You want the meeting to be enjoyable and personal, but make sure you have time to fully convey your message.

## Wrapping it up

- Leave behind any material you've prepared.
- Note any follow-up you've promised that was related to the conversation.
- Thank whomever you've met with for his or her time and public service. As a person of faith, you may ask to pray with the person and/or share that you keep leaders in your prayers.



Tweet from @FaithActionWA after a visit:  
"Thank you Alexandra from @RepRickLarsen's office for speaking to us today on..."

## After the meeting

- Send a note or email to thank your legislator for the meeting. Provide materials or other information that may have been promised.
- Use social media to strengthen your relationship with the office and to amplify the impact of your advocacy message. Tag your legislator. Add pictures or other visuals to attract more views, likes and shares. Use @ELCAadvocacy to notify us of your message so we can share in our networks!

**Also after the meeting... please complete an [ELCA Advocacy activity form](#).**

Why? In future interactions, this information helps us build upon and strengthen one another's efforts.

*Thank you for your advocacy!*