

This guide is intended to assist UU members and groups in planning, organizing, conducting, and documenting meetings with their legislators, either in-person or by virtual means.

## Setting Up the Meeting

- Decide what topic you wish to pursue with your member of Congress and what you want to achieve in the meeting. What will you ask the member to do?
- Conduct some research to determine the member's position on the relevant issues based on related votes or published information.
- Identify who will attend the meeting and when they are available.
- [Here is a tool to look up your representative, and their website.](#)

### Do Some Homework on Contacts:

- Check your member's website to see if they have specific instructions on setting up a meeting (usually 30 minutes).
- If you run into roadblocks, don't give up!

## Preparing for the Meeting

- Prepare the needed materials for the meeting:
  - Meeting agenda (see Sample Agenda below under The Meeting)
  - Leave behind materials that describe your group's position on the issue (see [Sample Leave Behind Document](#) from the Faithful Democracy Coalition - yours does not need to be this fancy)
- Hold a pre-meeting with attendees to agree on the agenda, specific topics to be discussed, questions to be asked, and what roles attendees will play in the meeting,
- Send agenda and meeting connection information to attendees.
- Send a list of attendees, topic to be discussed, and leave behind information to legislator/staff member who will be attending the meeting.

## The Meeting

The point of these meetings is to make sure your senator or representative knows who you are, what groups you represent, what your main concerns are, and what you want the member to do.

- Respect the member's office and time. Meetings are usually 30 minutes long.
- Thank them for something (a good vote, a thing they said in the news, or even just taking the time to meet).
- Talk about why this issue is important to you. Talk from the heart.
- Make a clear and direct ask. For example: "Will the senator co-sponsor legislation to reform our democracy?"
- Then listen.
- Lastly, try to enjoy the meeting, It's ok to be a little nervous before these meetings, especially if it's your first one ever.
- In general, this should be a positive experience, even if your representative isn't supportive. At worst they'll tell you they don't agree. At best, you'll identify a champion who will make some much-needed changes. This is the best way to find out!

## After the Meeting

- Debrief with the attendees after the meeting. What did we learn? How supportive is the member on our issue? What do we need to do for a follow-up? Who will do it?
- If this has been a UUSJ affiliated meeting send a report to UUSJ
- Send a thank-you email to the staff person you met with.
- Share what you learned with partners and congregants through conversations, posts, and newsletters