



Build A Relationship With Your Legislators

Meeting with your legislators is a great way to take part in the political process.

First, Identify the Elected Officials Who Represent You:

Type your address in the box labeled "Who Represents Me?":

<https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/>

Next, Do Your Research

Read the legislators bio and look over any press releases or news articles linked to their profile on either <https://www.ohiosenate.gov/senators> or <https://ohiohouse.gov/members/directory>.

Look for things you may have in common with them or can talk with them about, like hometowns, organizations, interests, etc. Any small piece of information you can use to form a bond at the start of the meeting!

Schedule a Meeting!

There are a few ways to do this. You can call the office or send an email.

When calling:

- ❖ Go to the representative's or senator's website.
- ❖ Find their office phone number under the "Contact" tab.

Here's a script you can use when calling to schedule a meeting:

"Hello, my name is _____. I live at (your address). I am calling to schedule a meeting with _____ to talk about _____. I would like to meet (on zoom/at the statehouse/at a location in our district)."

- ❖ You can use this same script to leave a voicemail, just include your phone number at the end. ***"Please give me a call back at (your phone number)."***

When emailing:

- Ohio state representatives use the email format rep(district number)@ohiohouse.gov.
 - For example, Representative Bill Seitz represents District 30, so his email is rep30@ohiohouse.gov
- Ohio senators use the email format LastName@ohiosenate.gov.
 - For example, Senator Louis Blessing's email is blessing@ohiosenate.gov

Here is an email template you can use:

Subject: *Scheduling Constituent Meeting*

Email Body:

Hello,

My name is _____. My address is _____. I am reaching out to schedule a meeting with _____ to discuss _____.

I would like to meet (on zoom/at the statehouse/at a location in our district).

Here are a few upcoming dates and times I am available:

(include days and times)

Please let me know what works best for the (representative/senator). Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you,

Name

(Your email, phone number)

Scheduling Tips

- ❖ Always include your address. This lets legislators know you are in their district and makes it more likely they will engage with you.
- ❖ Let the legislative aide know what you want to talk about. This ensures the legislator will be more prepared.
- ❖ Come prepared with days and times you want to meet, but being flexible makes it more likely you will meet the actual representative or senator and not with their staff.
- ❖ However, meeting with legislative aides and staff is effective and important, too! These people help make things happen in the office.

Now That You've Scheduled the Meeting, How Should You Prepare?

Legislators have a limited amount of time to discuss issues with members of their communities. It is important to know what you want to discuss with them before you meet. Research or practice your points before the meeting.

- ❖ Write down any statistics or important information on a notepad for the meeting to keep yourself organized.
- ❖ If relevant, consider sharing personal examples that show how the issue(s) affects your or your community.
- ❖ Connect personal stories to data or statistics that put the issue in context.
- ❖ If there are any written materials you want them to read before the meeting, make sure you email that to them 1 or 2 days ahead of time.
- ❖ Keep it simple and focus on one or two issues.

What to Expect in the Meeting

- ❖ The meeting will usually happen very quickly!
- ❖ Most often, virtual meetings last 30 minutes.
- ❖ A lot of times, the aides will also be on the call and will not put their camera on. They are there to help the legislator, if needed. Keep going through the meeting even if you don't see or hear them.
- ❖ Legislators might ask you technical questions or want detailed information. It is okay to let them know if you don't have an answer, but tell them you will get an answer and email it to them.

Tips for Talking to Your Legislator

- ❖ Start by thanking them for the meeting.
- ❖ Let them know the issue or issues you are there to discuss.
- ❖ Tell them a personal story that relates to the issue if you are comfortable.
- ❖ They might cut you off or interrupt you with a question. Stay calm and try your best to respond to their question or statement.
- ❖ Sometimes meetings can be frustrating if they don't seem interested or seem argumentative. Stick to your topic.

What to do After the Meeting

Send a thank you email or thank you card. It is always important to thank them for the meeting.

Template you can use for email or card:

"Hi (insert their title and name),

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me to discuss _____. [Briefly restate the issue and potential solution(s) discussed.] I look forward to collaborating in the future.

Thank you,

(Insert your name)

GOOD LUCK!*