

Visiting Your Member of Congress

Request an Appointment

- Contact the scheduler in your Congressperson's office for an appointment with your Member of Congress or the aide who handles your issue. Contact the District Office for Local Visit
- The contact information for your Member of Congress is at their web site which can be found through www.house.gov or www.senate.gov
- Tell the scheduler the dates you are available, the issue you will discuss and who will be present during the visit
- Confirm the visit by phone a day or two before the appointment

Prepare for the Visit

- Know something about your Congressperson's likely position on the issue; your Congressperson's web site is a good source of information
- Review background on the issue and current, specific legislation relating to it
- Prepare a one-page summary of your position to leave with your Member of Congress
- Make a plan for the visit:
 - Choose a spokesperson to start. Decide who will say what
 - Think of questions and counterpoints that may come up and plan a response
- Practice the visit

Make the Visit

- Dress for success and be on time
- Explain who you are why you are there
- Connect with the Congressperson by thanking her/him for something they have done
- Explain the problem you want to address, and the solution
- Be clear, concise, compelling and credible
- Be polite and firm in explaining your position; avoid criticism
- Bring the conversation back to your message if it goes off track
- Use examples from your personal experience
- Ask for specific responses (e.g. co-sponsor a bill, speak out on the issue, vote for a bill)
- Record key points of the conversation and questions you can't answer; volunteer to find information and get back to your Member of Congress
- Leave a short written summary of your position

Follow Up on the Visit

- Write a thank you note to your Congressperson with a summary of your conversation
- Send the answers to any questions you said you'd research
- Continue the dialogue with your Member of Congress and her/his staff

Franciscan Action Network

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Lobby Visit Planning Sheet

Member: _____ Office Location: _____
Time of Visit: _____

1. Facts about the Member of Congress

Party: _____ Religion: _____
Term: When Elected: _____ When up for re-election: _____
Committees: _____
Record on this issue: _____
Positive Contributions: _____

2. People making this visit:

Tips: Have each person introduce her/himself by sharing name and where they are from. If you are a constituent, say so. Name groups you represent and tell how many people are involved in each.

Spokesperson _____ Note-taker _____

Tip: Say something positive about the Member at the beginning of the visit

Timekeeper/Intervener _____

Tip: Don't let the Member/staff person take the conversation off track

Speaker:	What they will say:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Tip: Tell a personal story that connects you with the issue.

3. About the Issue

Bill Number: _____ Bill Name: _____

Talking Points (separate page)

What will we leave with the Member/staff? _____

What do we want the Member to do? _____

Tips: Ask for a specific action.

Thank the Member/staff for their time and consideration.

4. Follow Up

Who will write the thank-you note? _____

What additional information needs to be sent? _____

What is the next step? _____

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