

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY: HOW TO TALK TO LEGISLATORS



1. Make the Call:

Script: Requesting a Meeting

Hi, my name is _____. I'm contacting you on behalf of (name of your organization) regarding our election integrity project here in (State). This is a non-partisan effort to educate and encourage citizens to get involved in the election process. We would truly appreciate an opportunity to speak with (name of representative) about this initiative.

Would it be possible to make an appointment to meet with (representative) for 15-20 minutes? We'd like to let (him/her) know about our election integrity initiative and talk about state election code reforms that may be considered this legislative session.

2. Be Prepared

- Research representatives' backgrounds
- Know what issues are important to them
- Find out what committees they serve on
- Get to know staff members
- If representatives are unavailable, ask to meet with their Chiefs of Staff

3. Be Professional

- Dress professionally in business attire
- Know exactly where legislators' offices are, where to park
- Be on time
- Bring professionally-printed business cards and leave-behind materials

4. Present Your Case

- Briefly introduce yourself and your organization to staff, representatives
- Summarize specific election integrity issues in your state – support with facts
- Identify possible legislative solutions
- Gauge representatives' interest in supporting election reform legislation – if appropriate, ask if they are willing to sponsor legislation
- Leave behind business cards, professionally-printed materials on your organization and legislative goals
- Thank representatives and staff for their time

5. Follow Up

- Send written thank-you's
- Offer additional information or research on issues discussed
- Schedule follow-up meetings with potential bill sponsors to discuss specific legislation
- Contact legislators/staff regularly – track progress of bills

6. Committee Hearings

- Prepare to testify on behalf of bills – know committee hearing dates, times, locations; procedure for getting on witness list
- Make notes, plus handouts if applicable
- Be professional & concise – be prepared for questions, esp. from opponents
- Follow up with committee members to restate your support for the legislation

BE PREPARED • BE PROFESSIONAL • BE A PARTNER WITH LEGISLATORS

See **References and Resources** for links to states' legislatures and elections codes.