



# How To Have A Great Hill Meeting

In-person visits from constituents are one of the most powerful ways to engage with Members of Congress and build relationships with their staff. These meetings provide a valuable opportunity for lawmakers to hear firsthand what matters most to their constituents and understand how key issues impact their states or districts. They also serve as a crucial avenue for highlighting needs that may not yet be on their radar, sharing personal stories, and presenting important data that can shape their perspective and actions.

Here are a few ways to get the most out of your meetings. (For one example, [check out these short talking points](#) to help maximize your time!)

## The Ask

Have a clear, concise ask for Members and their staff. Weave it into your meeting, your follow-up note, your social media and more!

One example: *I'm here today to urge you to protect and prioritize funding for child care programs as part of this year's Appropriations process.*

## Before You Go

### Set Up Your Meetings

Member websites have a "schedule a visit" link. Use this to send a meeting request, including the date and purpose of your visit as well as mentioning that you are a constituent. It is helpful to also call the office and ask for the scheduler's email address and send it along that way as well!

For example:

*I am a constituent of [Representative/Senator \_\_\_\_\_ member of Congress's name] and I live in [insert name of community/city]. I am also [a quick line about your role - a parent, an employer, an advocate, a teacher, a provider.]*

*I am requesting the opportunity to meet with the [Representative/Senator] or their staff when I am in Washington D.C. on [DATE] to talk about the importance of affordable, quality child care in our state. Specifically, I'd like to talk about [add a line about what you'd like to talk about here!]*

*Thank you for taking the time to help with this meeting request. I hope to hear from you soon.*

Name

Email Address

### Review Talking Points and the Ask

Find out what Congress is actively discussing while you are in Washington - are they working on budget and appropriations? Tax credits? Other child care legislation? For one example, [check out these short talking points](#).

### Get Ready for the Hill!

- Buildings and offices can be far apart. Take a moment to look [at a map of the Hill](#) to plan your meetings!
- Leave plenty of time to get through security and find your way through the buildings. Don't be afraid to ask security guards for directions!
- Wear comfortable footwear; you'll be walking a lot, and the marble floors can be tricky with heels or hard-soled shoes.
- Have a meeting plan. Who will start the introductions? Who will make the ask? Who is ready to tell a story?

# During Your Meeting

## What To Expect

- **Keep it short!** Keep your conversation short, straightforward, and focused on the primary ask. Members and staff are frequently juggling hearings, votes, other meetings, which means meetings are frequently cut short - make your key points early!
- **Be patient and flexible.** You may meet with Members; you may also meet with staffers (who are important, as they are the people doing the research, making the recommendations, and directly engaged in the work.)
- **And expect the unexpected!** Offices are small and busy, so meetings can take place anywhere – in an office, in a conference room, in a hallway.

## Tips for a Successful Meeting

Be ready with three things: The Story. The Local Element. The Ask.

- **The Story:** Know your talking points, but also talk about why this issue is so important to you that you took time to come to Congress to talk about it. [As an example, check out these short talking points.](#)
- **The Local Element:** Members and staff care deeply about how issues affect their state or district and love making personal connections with constituents. Tell a personal story. Give local examples about how child care has an impact on the families, businesses, and children in your community.
- **The Ask:** Make it once, make it twice! Be very clear and specific about what you want your Members to do. *For example: Please ask your Boss to protect and expand the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC), the only tax credit that specifically helps parents with child care costs. or We are urging your office to protect and prioritize funding for child care during this year's funding conversations.*
- **The Extras That Make A Difference:**
  - Make sure to introduce everyone in your group!
  - Thank Members and Staff for taking the time to meet and for any prior support for child care.
  - Invite them to see a program in action next time they're in the district.
  - And ask if you can take a photo!

## What Staffers Are Thinking

"Interesting issue. But how does this specifically impact our state?"

"Do people in our state (aka our constituents) actually care about this?"

"What exactly do you need my Boss (the Member) to \*do\* about this?"

# The Follow Up

One of the most important moments of your meeting happens once you've gone home! The Follow Up provides a valuable way to reinforce your message and build the relationship with your Member and Staff.

- **Send a Thank You email.** Thank the Member/Staffer for meeting with you and reinforce The Ask! Include links to any relevant information you discussed and don't forget to invite them to see child care in action in your state the next time they're home.
- **Leverage Social Media.** Share the photo from your visit and tag your Member. Say thank you and reinforce the ask. For example: *A great day in DC today – thank you @MEMBER's office for meeting with us to talk about the importance of affordable child care in our state and how prioritizing #CDCTC (#HeadStart #CCDBG) could help more families!*
- **Let us know how it went!** FFYF spends a lot of time on the Hill, talking to offices, providing data and research, tracking support for legislation and more. Your intel is an important part of that – please shoot us a note and let us know how it went!
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