
BECOME AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR

Whether you are visiting your legislators, writing them letters, or inviting them to a program, function or event, the following tips should help you make your points more effectively.

VISITING YOUR LAWMAKER

Your goal in making a visit to your lawmaker's office is simple: Establish a relationship and exchange information and ideas on issues that concern you. To make the most of your meeting, make sure to:

- Introduce yourself (and your organization, The Arc).
- Identify one or two of the issues that most concern you.
- Ask your legislator his or her position on the issue. Be polite but direct. Do not let the legislator avoid the issue.
- Encourage questions. Offer to provide extra information that might be useful to the legislator.
- Ask which staff person will serve as a contact on this issue. Let the legislator know you will be following up with the staff person.
- Thank the legislator for taking time to meet with you.
- Follow up with a personal thank-you note. Briefly restate your position and enclose information as appropriate.

GENERAL TIPS

- Be sensitive to the legislator's busy schedule. Plan on the meeting lasting 15-20 minutes. Be the first to conclude the visit.
- Keep your message simple. Back up all statements with facts.
- Cooperate rather than confront. Do not threaten to withdraw your support if your legislator does not agree with you.
- If you don't know the answer to a question when asked, don't guess or bluff. Offer to get back to the legislator with accurate information.
- Absolutely do not promise campaign contributions or re-election support in exchange for a vote on an issue.

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