



Personal visits with a legislator are the most effective method of advocating your issue. Use the following guide to help you make your visit a success.

Advocate's Guide to Personal Visits with Legislators	Before the Visit
	1. Call the legislator's office. The best opportunity to set up a meeting is during a legislative recess. If the legislator is unable to meet, ask to meet with their staff person handling the issue.
	2. Make an appointment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State the name and or number of the bill or issue and your position. • State your attendees' names, addresses, and affiliations. Notify the office in advance of any changes in this list. • Confirm the meeting date, time, attendees, purpose, and background in writing.
	3. Prepare for the meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan on the meeting lasting between 15-30 minutes. • Develop a one-page position paper and make copies to distribute at your meeting. • Educate yourself about the official – their background, political philosophy and the number of community associations in their district. • Develop 2-3 key points that you want to convey to the legislator. Use layperson's terms and personal experiences to make your points. • Consider what questions may be asked and develop concise answers to those questions.
	4. Be flexible. Legislator's schedules often changed due to urgent meetings, hearings or votes so your meeting may be canceled or delayed. You can always ask to meet with a staff person responsible for the issue.
	During the Visit
	1. Arrive 5-10 minutes prior to the meeting.
	2. Briefly introduce yourself and other attendees. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let the legislator know how many individuals reside in your association(s). • Mention that you are a constituent and CAI member.
	3. Clearly explain your issue. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use layperson's terms. • Use personal experience to describe how the issue affects you or your community. • Do not read from your position paper.
	4. Ask if the legislator has any questions. Then ask directly for his or her support. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay attention to the response. He or she might be talking with several groups about the issue to determine their position. • Never argue or act combative with the legislator or staff person.
	5. Thank the legislator or staff member for his or her time. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sum up any commitments made by the legislator. • Offer to provide further information or a meeting with other residents. • Leave your written position paper.
	After the Visit
	1. Write a personal thank you note to the legislator and any staff with whom you met. Briefly restate your position and include any additional information that may have been requested. Provide a summary of your understanding of the outcome of the meeting.
	2. Maintain contact with the legislator as the issue progresses. Continue to provide feedback or input to remind the legislator or staff person of your ongoing interest in the issue.