



EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS

GENERAL OVERVIEW

It is important that you and other champions of Lions from your state meet with your Members of Congress and their staff to tell them firsthand why Lions Clubs International is important and why they should (and how they can) support our priorities.

Face-to-face meetings, phone calls, letters (including faxes and e-mails) and special events are all important ways to engage Members of Congress. It is especially helpful to bring Members of Congress (and their staff) to your events in their Districts and States. We know that seeing Lions' programs makes believers out of witnesses. **Please work extra-diligently to get Members to attend your events!**

Members of Congress and staff almost always have very positive feelings towards Lions Clubs and our movement – remember that when you engage them in our cause. Our challenge is to move Members from merely thinking of Lions as something “nice.” We want them to appreciate the IMPORTANCE of Lions programs in their districts and states, and to take action to support them. Be clear what you want a Member to do when you communicate with them—we will always have a clear “ask.”

Some key things to remember when visiting with elected officials and staff:

- **Relax! You are the “experts” on Lions. Come to a meeting with a Member of Congress or staffer prepared to tell your story: How Lions has benefited your life and the life of your community.**
- **Dress appropriately: standard business attire when in the office. More casual wear is acceptable during Lions Clubs meetings or other venues.**

Preparing for Visits With Your Members of Congress

***Request the meeting:**

- Call and e-mail their scheduler 2-3 weeks in advance of your desired meeting date.
- Be clear about the purpose of your meeting.

Prepare for the meeting:

- Create “talking points” that you will touch upon at the meeting.
- Prepare handouts to give to the Member of Congress (i.e. Fact Sheet about your priorities; examples of how Lions benefits children with diabetes, vision health, etc.)
- Review talking points with all meeting participants ahead of time—make sure everyone has a role at the meeting.





Lions Clubs International

What to wear to the meeting:

- To the best of everyone's ability, you should wear business attire. Nice trousers and a jacket and tie or a suit for men, business suit for women.
- Comfortable walking shoes.

What to bring to the meeting:

- Brief written materials
 - Overview of State Programs (number of Lions in the State/District, charities served, etc.)
 - Photographs, charts, anecdotes
 - Synopsis of Ask

What to expect at the meeting:

- Meetings on Capitol Hill can and will take place anywhere. Be prepared to meet in a Member's office, in a Committee Hearing room, in the hall or in a reception area.
- Do not be alarmed if there are interruptions, tardiness, early departures, cancellations and rescheduled visits.
- Anticipate that you may not meet with the person you were scheduled to see; another staff person may "cover" the meeting.
- Expect a neutral response. Members and staff are rarely in the position to make firm commitments.

Follow-up:

- Thank you letters should be sent after each visit with a Member of Congress. LCI will assist with templates.
- Send a brief "meeting report" to governmentrelations@lionsclubs.org after any visits or events with Members.

