

STAYING CIVICALLY ENGAGED BY BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS



THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO STAY ON THE LOOP

- Attend Townhalls
- Sign up for newsletter
- Visits to district or capital offices
- Social media



THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO STAY ENGAGED

- Phone calls
 - Letter, postcards, and emails
 - Visits to district or capital offices
 - Local press (like letters to the editor)
 - Social media
-
- FUN FACT: staffers record many of these interactions + bring to their boss (especially by volume)



WHY ENGAGE?



9 out of 10 (91%) congressional staffers surveyed said it would be helpful to have information about the impact the bill/issue would have on the district or state.

ONLY 9%
say they receive that information frequently.

-Congressional Management Foundation (2015)



WHY ENGAGE?



Similarly, 79% said a personal story from a constituent related to a bill or issue would be helpful.

-Congressional Management Foundation (2015)

ONLY 18%
say they receive that
information
frequently.



**RELATIONSHIP BUILDING IS A LONG-
TERM EFFORT**



When asked what advocacy groups should do more of to build relationships with the office, 79% of staff surveyed said "meet or get to know the Legislative Assistant with jurisdiction over their issue area" and 62% said "meet or get to know the District/State Director."

-Congressional Management Foundation
(2015)



COLUMBAN ADVOCATES MEETING WITH SENATOR FEINSTEIN'S STAFF



HOW TO CONDUCT “IN- PERSON” MEETINGS



1. REQUEST AN APPOINTMENT

- Visit your Elected official's website and find their contact information
- Contact the Scheduler in your elected representative's office to make an appointment.
- Try to get an appointment with the rep and if you can't, then the most relevant staffer.
- Confirm the visit by phone/email a day or two before the appointment.



2. DO YOUR RESEARCH

- Research your issue.
- Practice your story
- Do research on your rep's likely position on the issue
- Think of questions and counter arguments that may come up and plan possible responses.



3. MAKE A PLAN FOR THE VISIT

- Decide what you will specifically ask your rep to do (e.g., co-sponsor a bill, speak on the issue, vote for a bill, etc.).
- If you're meeting as a group, decide who will say what during the meeting.
 - Spokesperson
 - Timekeeper
 - Speakers
- Practice the visit.
- Prepare a short, written summary of your position and send it a few days before your visit.



4. DO THE VISIT

- Introduce your group and express appreciation for your rep's work. Be specific.
- Share your personal and/or communal experience about the issue.
- Ask for specific action (e.g., co-sponsor a bill, speak on the issue, vote for a bill, etc.).
- **If your rep supports your ask**, ask them for ways that you (or your group) could support their work.
- **If your rep doesn't support your ask**, ask them what it would take to get them to support the issue or bill.



THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND DURING YOUR VISIT

- You're the expert.
- **BUT**, if you can't answer a question you're asked, that's okay. Volunteer to find out and get back to them.
- Find a common value.
- Stay on message. Bring the conversation back to your message if it goes off track.
- End with a thank you.

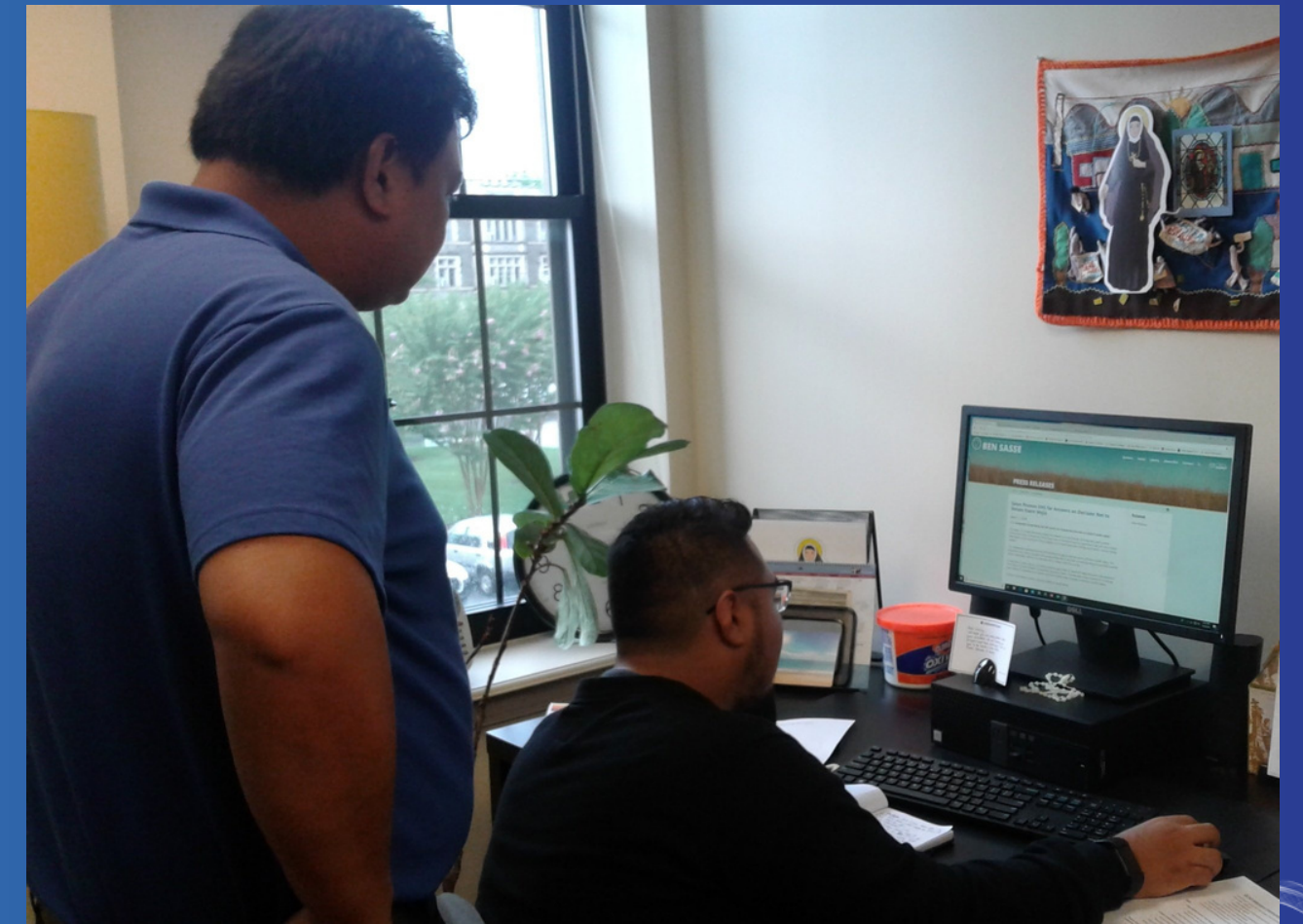


This is the beginning!



5. FOLLOW-UP ON THE VISIT

- Send a thank you note to your rep with a summary of your conversation.
- Send the answer(s) to any question(s) you said you'd research.
- Continue to build the relationship with your rep and their office. There are many ways you can do this!
 - a. On social media
 - b. In local press



What's included?

- Step-by-step "how-to" guides
- Worksheets
- Pro-tips subheading



**THE
ADVOCATE'S
TOOLBOX**

How to influence policy
get your message into the media
and build relationships with your Members of Congress



ST. COLUMBAN MISSION
FOR JUSTICE, PEACE AND ECOLOGY





THE ADVOCATE'S TOOLBOX

How to influence policy
get your message into the media
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 SCAN ME



QUESTIONS?



STAY IN TOUCH

VISIT US ONLINE

WWW.COLUMBANJPE.ORG

CONTACT US

CCAOPROGRAMS@COLUMBAN.ORG



THANK YOU!

