Hook, Line & Sinker

How to Have an Effective Meeting with your Legislator

Meetings with legislators are often short and it can be difficult to figure out where to start and what to say. Following the *Hook, Line & Sinker* model provides some simple structure to so you can have an effective and impactful meeting with your legislators. Also included are some added tips for when your meeting is being conducted virtually.

Hook: Basic Introductions

Briefly introduce yourself at the start of the meeting and establish yourself as a constituent in the legislator's district. Consider adding a few unique details to underscore the fact that your group represents a broad cross-section of the district.

- *Virtual Meeting Tip:* If there are multiple constituents in your meeting, managing introductions may be time consuming and bumpy. Prioritizing time for your story and the ask is important. Consider sending a list of people who will be in your meeting in advance and designating a point person to lead on a brief introduction of your group.

Line: Local Stories and Statistics

Provide the legislator with your story, local connections to the issue, and/or some basic statistics about your chosen issue. This could include sharing of personal experiences, which helps put a face to an issue and make it more real and tangible for your legislator. If you do use statistics, make sure to only highlight a couple with the biggest impact. Listing out a bunch of numbers or data points can get overwhelming and lose focus. Remember, stories of real people are your greatest tool as an advocate.

- *Virtual Meeting Tip:* Similar to introductions, you will need to prioritize your talking points here. Pick one story and a couple of key data points if available to keep things concise and focused on talking points that have the biggest impact.

Sinker: The Legislative Ask

Stay on message! Make a clear request of the policy maker. Ask for a commitment and then listen carefully to the response. Legislators will often need some time to consider supporting or opposing a proposed change, but they will often share important insights into their thought process.

- *Virtual Meeting Tip:* Staying on message can be even more difficult during virtual meetings. There is a lot of risk for distraction with issues, technology, and general life (think cats walking across your screen and kids coming into the room). Make sure you end on a strong note and that your ask is clear.

Thank you

Always remember to thank them for taking the time to talk with you.

Virtual Meeting Tip: Have a 'Plan B'

Technology glitches and limited time make it even more important to your messaging honed and being prepared with a 'plan b' if there are technology challenges. Make sure to test your technology in advance and have a 'plan b' in place should something happen. This could include having a written statement prepared that summarizes what you were going to say or have a call-in number in case video conferencing falters.