

Meeting with your Legislator

Introduction

Introduce yourself in a way that allows the legislator to place you in the community. Legislators like to know a little bit about the person with whom they are speaking. If you're a constituent, say so.

15 minutes

Realize that you will likely have at most 15 minutes to meet with your legislator, and probably less than that. Be prepared to make the most of your time. Try to get to the point of your visit quickly.

Be flexible

You may have an appointment with a legislator, but find upon your arrival that she or he is unavailable and your meeting will be with staff. Treat and talk with staff in the same way and with the same deference that you would treat the legislator. Legislators tend to value the opinions of their staff very highly.

Use personal examples

When possible, talk about how you or your clients or both are or would be affected by the subject under discussion. Talking points are useful, but personal narratives are better. It's one thing to say things like "Justice delayed is justice denied"; it's more effective to say, for example, that because of Oregon eCourt and the state's investment in information technology, your clients have easier and 24 hour access to courts.

Don't exaggerate!

Be careful not to overstate problems, or be overly dismissive of criticisms or other points of view. If you are asked something you don't know, say that you don't know and that you'll get back to the questioner with the answer. Then make a point to do it.

At the conclusion of your appointment, thank the legislator and the staff.

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