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## Visiting with your Elected Officials – In Person or Virtually

*A man dies when he refuses to stand up for that which is right.*

*A man dies when he refuses to stand up for justice.*

*A man dies when he refuses to take a stand for that which is true.*

*Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

### YOU are Part of the Process

- Elected officials report to the voters and are eager to hear from their constituents.
- You are their constituent and you are the one that will cast a vote in the next election, so your opinion matters.
- Due to demands on their time and the large number of constituents, it may be challenging to meet with representatives and senators, but they know the value of these meetings – for you and for them.
- These meetings, whether with the official or a staffer, provide insight and can sway the representative or senator into a change of heart or into action.

### The Visit

- Thank the Member of Congress or staffer for taking the visit and remind him/her/them of the purpose of the visit.
- If the Member is a sponsor or co-sponsor of the legislation you are advocating for, be sure to thank her/him.
- Be clear and concise, polite but firm and constructive rather than critical.
- Use examples from personal experience or what you learn, along with supporting facts.
- Bring the conversation back to your message if it goes off track.
- If there are questions you cannot answer, make a note of them and volunteer to find the information and get back to the staff later.
- Get feedback: ask for the Member's position on the issue. If the staffer does not know, ask for a specific date by which they will get back to you.
- Leave / Email the materials you brought for the staffer.

### Follow up after the Visit

- Write a thank you note or email to your Member of Congress or staffer with whom you met and re-emphasize key points in your conversation.
- If you are taking a more active role in advocacy, this will serve as the beginning of building a relationship with the relevant staff.