



Advocacy Tip Sheet for Face-to-Face Meetings

Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees from PA

For contact information, call the Senate Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121 or the House Capitol Switchboard at 202-225-3121 and ask for the Senator's or Representative's office. Then ask for the staff person who handles appropriations and note the name for future reference.

Pennsylvania

Sen. Arlen Specter (REP-PA), Ranking Member,
Senate Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and
Education Appropriations

Rep. John Murtha (DEM-PA-12th)

*Rep. Chaka Fattah (DEM-PA-2nd)

Rep. John Peterson (REP-PA-5th)

Rep. Dave Weldon (REP-PA-15th)

Red: Members of Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations

*Cosponsor of Lifespan Respite Legislation in 109th Congress

Meeting with Senators and Members of the House of Representatives

You can meet with your legislator in a state or local district office or in the Washington, D.C. office. Proper preparation is essential for ensuring a successful visit.

First, call to set up an appointment to meet the Senator or Representative (see below on how to make an appointment). You can find the phone number in the U.S. government section of your telephone book, by calling information, or by going to the Member's website (either www.senate.gov or www.house.gov).

If you wish to contact your legislator in the D.C. office, use the Capitol switchboard to place the call or to obtain the phone number. Simply dial 202-224-3121 and ask for your legislator's office. You can also access the Member's other contact information and staff names at www.congress.org.

First thing to remember: Policy makers won't think you are rude for stating what you want, and may think it odd if you don't. Part of their job is to be asked and part of your job is to ask.

Make the Appointment well in advance: When attempting to meet with a member, contact the Appointment Secretary/Scheduler in the office or ask to speak with the staffer who handles health and/or disability issues. Explain your purpose and whom you are representing (PA used as an example).

- Hello. My name is _____. May I speak with Senator/Rep. _____'s scheduler or the person who handles health and disability issues? (If you already have the name of the local or DC staff contact, just ask for them directly)
- I am with the PA Respite Coalition. The members of the Coalition include numerous statewide organizations, including (name a few of the larger organizations who are members such as UCP, Easter Seals, MS, AARP, etc.)
- I am calling to schedule an appointment at a convenient time to meet with Senator/Rep. _____ or the appropriate staffer to discuss the Lifespan Respite Care Act and the accelerating need for respite care in PA.

Don't underestimate the importance of staff.

- If you can only get an appointment with a staffer, don't underestimate the importance of the staffer or the meeting. Sometimes this type of meeting can be even more important because it is the staffer's job to make sure their boss has all the facts and gets back to you in a timely way.

Plan your presentation.

- Be prepared to explain the extent of the need for respite in your state (Number of family caregivers, the cost born by your state's caregivers, waiting lists for respite, etc).
- Familiarize yourself with the statistics that describes the need and benefits of respite, the summary and legislative status of the Lifespan Respite Care Act, and how the Senator/Rep. can help get funding, and be prepared to share the information.
- Bring a list of legislators from your state already supporting Lifespan Respite funding.
- If time is extremely limited, practice making your pitch in two minutes or less, but be prepared to follow-up with more information if time permits.
- PRACTICE

Limit your visit to discussing the Lifespan Respite Care Act and related local examples.

- Stay focused and avoid side issues.
- Remember that what you hope to get out of the meeting is funding for the Lifespan Respite Care Act and/or a commitment to attend an event you have planned.
- If they are already support Lifespan Respite funding, thank them for their leadership and encourage them to contact Congressional Leadership and Appropriations Committee members to fund the bill.
- Summarize and share the **material/data** from the one-pager and any other materials you brought along.

- Share any **personal stories** you may have about your own or your client's needs for respite care.
- Be courteous and respectful to staff members as well as the legislator.
- Keep your message brief, to the point, and simple.

Be Polite but also be Political

- Members of Congress want to represent the best interests of their district or state. Whenever possible, demonstrate the connection between what you are requesting and the interest of the Member's Constituency.
- Let them know how you plan to share the results of this meeting with others (through a mailing or newsletter or at the summit)
- Describe for the member how you or your groups can be of assistance to him/her. (e.g., find respite for other constituents, find more information, etc.)

Listen to your legislator's responses.

- Leave time for questions.
- Find out if he or she has heard opposing views. If so, find out what the arguments are and what groups are involved.

Be Truthful and Accurate. If you don't know the answer to a question, don't make it up.

- Offer to find out and send information back to the office later.

Remember to ask for a commitment and be sure to Thank Them.

- Ask for a letter from the Senator or Representative stating his/her position on the Lifespan Respite Care Act and whether he/she will cosponsor the bill.
- If the purpose is also to ensure that they attend an event, check for a commitment to attend.

Follow up your visit with a thank you note.

- Note should outline the points covered during the meeting
- Send along any additional information and materials requested.
- Thank them for their time and support.

Please let me know how the meeting went and its outcome.