

ADVOCACY MEETING DO'S

DO be on time and prepared. Try to arrive early to allow time to get through security and find the room.

DO anticipate meeting with either your elected official or a staff member. Staff-level meetings can be very impactful, as staffers are the experts who work closely with members of Congress and advise them on issues based on constituent input and persuasive information.

DO practice what you want to discuss in advance. Stay on message, stick to your main talking points, and be concise. Be specific about what you want and why, referring to bills by name, number, and sponsors.

DO research in advance about the legislator's committee assignments, priority issues for the district, and voting record and views on related issues.

DO try to get specific answers: Will the legislator vote in support of this bill? Be a cosponsor? What steps will he/she take to advance the issue? Legislators and staff may not want to make a commitment, so you may need to be persistent and ask the question in different ways to make a clear request for what you want from this meeting.

DO share a personal story or insight from the local community with your legislator to help illustrate your key points and explain why the issue is important to you.

DO leave materials and information on the issue and about MAZON with your legislator and his/her staff.

DO ask to take a group picture with the member and post on social media to call attention to the meeting and the issues discussed. Tag @MAZONusa in the posts and share the photo with MAZON.

DO thank whomever you meet with at the beginning of your visit and at the end. Follow up the meeting with a thank you note to everyone you met with, briefly re-stating your "asks".

DO debrief with your group afterwards to compare impressions of what you heard to take accurate notes and plan effective follow up actions. Also, discuss what went well, what could have been done better, what questions still need answers, and feel good about speaking out on important issues!

DO fill out a report form about the meeting and share it with MAZON.

ADVOCACY MEETING DON'TS

DON'T do lengthy introductions for everyone if you have a large group. Instead, briefly state the district/state, organization and community for those in your group.

DON'T argue with your legislator or the staffer and don't engage in partisan criticism. Make your points politely and stay on message. If needed, agree to disagree without getting adversarial.

DON'T allow the time to pass before you get to the key points for the meeting (you might only have 15 minutes). Watch the clock and be prepared to ask to move on to another issue if necessary.

DON'T allow your legislator to spend your time together focusing on issues that you did not come to discuss (often legislators want to share with Jewish groups how much they support Israel). Thank them politely for sharing, but take charge by offering, "we appreciate your support of Israel, but we are here today to talk with you about..."

DON'T make up a response if you don't know an answer. Let the person you are meeting with know you'll get back to them and follow up with MAZON staff to find the requested information.

DON'T be intimidated by your legislators. As a constituent, you have every right to be there, educate your elected officials about important issues, and attempt to persuade them to do the right thing through their votes and leadership actions.