



5

KEY POINTS

To successfully engage with Parliamentarians

1. Research and anticipate

It's important to have as much data and research as possible to defend your position when meeting with Parliamentarians and their staff. Spend time anticipating what kind of questions they will likely ask and make sure to have well-reasoned, well-researched answers ready. Statistics, reports and academic papers are all very helpful to be able to point back to in an answer.

It is also a good idea to research the person you are meeting with to help you frame your issue in a way that appeals to them and their interests.



“Success is where preparation and opportunity meet”

~ Bobby Unser



2. Define the bottom line

Every Parliamentarian or staffer will want to know what your “ask” is; that is, what is it that you need from them or need them to do on your behalf? You could ask for funding, legislation, legislative amendments, policy change, advocacy, and so forth.

It's helpful to tie asks to the government back to government policies or commitments, while opposition members would be interested in how it relates to their specific ideology or party platform.

3. Simplify your message

Time is usually very short when meeting with a Parliamentarian or their staff. You should be able to explain your issue, define your ask, and leave time for questions and discussion all within a 30 minute timeslot. It's a bonus if you can get a full hour. Try to focus on the key points and let your handouts and follow-up documents get into the technical details for you. Parliamentary offices will follow-up if they are interested.



4. Keep designs simple and impactful

Parliamentary offices receive hundreds of emails, briefs, handouts and presentations or “decks” everyday. It's impossible to read it all. Keep your documents short and work on making them graphically-appealing with an impactful design. Focus on highlighting important statistics and include links for those who would like to dive deeper into your issue and your reference materials.



5. Give lots of notice

The schedules of Parliamentarians and their staff book up quickly. If possible, make sure to give at least 3 weeks' notice when requesting a meeting. When scheduling several meetings in one day, see about meeting with groups of Parliamentarians to be more efficient, and build in transition time from one meeting to the next into your schedule. The Parliamentary precinct is quite large and there could be several blocks in between meeting venues.

Find more helpful resources:

www.PJProsper.ca