

## Find Your Representatives

If you aren't sure who your elected officials are, we're here to help. Simply enter your zip-code below, and our site will let you know exactly who represents your state and district.

- U.S. Senators – Get contact information for your Senators in the U.S. Senate.
- U.S. Representatives – Find the website and contact information for your Representative in the U.S. House of Representatives.

[The National Grange website is equipped to direct you to the information listed above-  
[nationalgrange.org/contact-your-representatives/](http://nationalgrange.org/contact-your-representatives/)]

## Meet With Your Representatives

Meeting with your elected officials is more than just a way to try and explain your opinions- it's a cornerstone of American life. If you have the opportunity to travel to your state capital or Washington, D.C., the Grange encourages you to reach out and request a meeting with elected officials. This is all easier said than done, however, and it can be a bit difficult to even know where to start.

The first thing you'll need to do is find who you wish to meet with and what their office email address and phone number are. This can be found via a quick internet search, as most elected officials will have official web pages or facebook pages that has this information public posted. Alternatively, you can follow these links to find your Senators and Representatives. Once you've found their contact information and decide you'd like to meet, there are some important questions to think about.

**When should you reach out to schedule?** Three weeks or so is the golden window on the hill, and that's about how early you should first contact the official you want to meet with. Any sooner than three weeks before you want to meet and you run the risk of getting 'elbowed out' in favor of other last minute meetings. Any later than that and you risk reaching out to a representative with a schedule that's already filled up.

**What should I write?** Remember to keep your emails and requests concise and clear. Schedulers often get hundreds of emails a day, so it's important that yours can be read quickly. Be sure to include your name, where you're from, and what issue you want to talk about with them. It isn't completely necessary to put your viewpoint or argument in the email- you'll be able to tell them exactly how you feel when you talk to them.

**Should I call them instead?** If you'd like, that's also a fine option. The same rules for calling apply to writing- being clear, concise, polite, and prepared is always a good way to stand above the crowd.

**What if I can't meet with them?** As frustrating as it may be, it isn't uncommon to have to meet with a legislative aide instead of the legislator themselves. If the legislator is busy and unable to meet at a time that works for you, the scheduler will often ask if you'd like to meet with an aide who works with the topics that interest you (which is why telling them what you'd like to talk about in your scheduling call or email is so important). Legislative aides are a core component of the congressional fleet, as they often have the responsibility of reading and explaining bills to legislators, developing and researching policies in their area of expertise, and communicating with those groups closest to their field.

**Can I just drop in?** On a federal level, you can certainly try it. There's no guarantee that there will be anyone available in the office, however, so it's still best to call ahead to schedule something. State capitols may vary on policy, however, so it's important to research the policies of your specific state's officials before you try a 'drop-in' appointment on a more local level.

**What should I bring?** That depends upon what you'd like to get out of the meeting. If you just want to introduce yourself to your legislator and meet them in person, it isn't necessary to go too overboard in preparations. Oftentimes, 'meet and greet' appointments move very quickly. If you have contacted them about a specific issue, however, it's important to come prepared to explain your side of the debate and is a good idea to have some notes available. A 'leave behind' is a flyer that summarizes your position and what you stand for- they shouldn't be longer than a page and should contain an overview of facts and figures that support your side. The Grange has many leave-behind materials that we have produced over the years. 'Leave-behinds' are a good way to make sure that they keep thinking about what you've said even after you've left.

**Extra notes on 'Leave Behinds':** If you decide to compose your own 'leave-behind' materials for your issue, keep a few crucial things in mind. They should never be more than one page and ideally should be no longer than one side of one page. Any complicated ideas or acronyms should be spelled out. Remember, there's a reasonable chance that the person you're talking to won't know as much about the issue as you. Keep things as concise, clear, and simple to understand as possible. Don't be afraid to furnish the 'leave-behind' with hard facts, figures, dates, sources, and other information that you might not have the time to convey in your conversation. The paper should be something they can return to when they're considering what you've said.

**Other General Advice:** Go into your meeting confidently and act naturally. Everyone inside the Beltway is trying to do their job, whether you approve of how they go about it or not, and the best way to be sure that your message rings loud and clear is to be natural, concise, and prepared. A well sourced argument, a friendly handshake, and a memorable 'leave-behind' will always leave more of an impression than a heated argument. Enjoy this most sacred of American rites, fellow Granger, and be sure to take a picture in their office!