

TOOLKIT

# MEETING WITH LEGISLATORS



lift louisiana



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# INTRODUCTION

Your elected State Legislators (Senators and Representatives) make time for meetings with constituents as part of their duties as elected officials. Face-to-face meetings are one of the most powerful ways to advocate for policies, as a meeting makes you and your issue more memorable to legislators. It is important to know that the staff who work for legislators are very important, too! Whether you meet directly with your State Senator or Representative or with their staff person, you are taking an important step by building a relationship with them. This makes them much more likely to pay attention when we call or email about a specific issue in the future.

# STEP BY STEP GUIDANCE FOR MEETINGS

## 1. FIND YOUR STATE LEGISLATORS:

You can find out who your state and federal legislators are at this website:

<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/FindMyLegislators.aspx>

Just enter your voting address. Then click on the link to their webpage. Their webpages include contact information, legislation they have authored and their committee assignments.



The image shows a laptop displaying a web page titled "YOUR LOUISIANA AND U.S. LEGISLATORS". The page contains a form for entering address information. The form includes a text area for a disclaimer about geocoding, followed by the heading "Enter your LA address information:". Below this heading are three input fields: "Address:", "City:", and "Zip Code:". A "Find" button is located below the "Zip Code" field.

**YOUR LOUISIANA AND U.S. LEGISLATORS**

service, the address you enter will be transmitted to Google for geocoding.  
out Google's data protection practices, please read Google's privacy policy at <http://www.google.com/privacypolicy>

**Enter your LA address information:**

Address:

City:

Zip Code:

## 2. CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATOR'S OFFICE TO SET UP A MEETING

**You can contact your legislator by email or phone.** When sending an email, it should contain the following:

- Your name and address (to show that you are a constituent)
- The issues you wish to discuss
- The dates that you can meet (include several dates or a wide time frame so that there is flexibility in scheduling the meeting)

**Offer to Meet In Person or Virtually.** If you/your group or your legislator would prefer to meet virtually, below are several options. Create the meeting and send the information to the legislator's staff and other constituents.

- **Free Video Conferencing From Zoom:** Host meetings for up to 40 minutes for free with a Basic plan
- **Google Meet:** Host meetings for up to 60 minutes for free with a free google account.

### SAMPLE EMAIL TO SCHEDULE MEETING

Dear [SENATOR or REPRESENTATIVE] [LAST NAME]:

As a concerned voter in your district, I am writing to request a meeting with you and your aides to discuss [ISSUES IMPACTING WOMEN AND FAMILIES].

I will be available to meet with you at your office or location of your choosing on [DATES YOU ARE AVAILABLE] and would welcome the opportunity to speak with you about these issues. I can be reached at this email or the phone number listed below and will look forward to hearing from you regarding a time to meet. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,  
 [YOUR NAME]  
 [YOUR ADDRESS]  
 M: [YOUR MOBILE PHONE]  
 O: [YOUR OFFICE PHONE]  
 H: [YOUR HOME PHONE]  
 E: [YOUR EMAIL]

**Follow up your request with a phone call.** Some legislators' staff answer emails quickly, while others may not respond. If you don't get a response within a few days, you should follow up with a phone call to their office.

**The following script can help guide your conversation.**

YOU: Hello, my name is [YOUR NAME] and I live in [CITY/TOWN]. I wanted to follow up on my request to meet with Representative/ Senator [NAME] regarding issues of importance to women and their families. Is Representative/Senator [NAME] available to meet with me on [DATE]?

OFFICE: I'm sorry -- the Representative/Senator isn't available on those dates.

YOU: Could you let me know some dates that he/she or a staff person might be available to meet with me?

**Write down the date, time and person you spoke with.** If you have not heard back in a few days, call again to follow up. Be polite but persistent!

**Recognize that you might meet with a member of your legislator's staff.** Sometimes legislators may not be available and you will be scheduled to meet with a member of their staff. This is still a wonderful opportunity! Legislators rely heavily on their aides to make decisions as aides are policy experts. Your meeting with a staff member can inform his/her recommendations to your legislator and also build an important relationship with your lawmakers' office.

**Confirm Your Appointment.** The day before your meeting, call your legislator's local office to confirm your appointment. Your legislator's office may request a list of those who will be attending the meeting, if there are attendees other than yourself. Resend the virtual meeting information if necessary.

### 3. PREPARE FOR YOUR MEETING

**Decide who will attend the meeting.** Bringing more than four or five people can be hard to manage. Keep it small, but bring people who represent different groups that have an interest in these issues.

**Plan out your meeting.** If you are bringing a group of constituents to the meeting, consider meeting before to plan for what issues you want to discuss at the meeting. People can get nervous in a meeting, and time is limited. Be sure that you lay out the meeting beforehand, including who will start the conversation. It is a good idea to give everyone a chance to speak so that the legislator gets to hear from all of their constituents.

**Agree on talking points.** It's tough to make a strong case for your position when you are disagreeing in the meeting! If a point is causing tension in the group, leave it out.

**Decide what you want to achieve.** What is it you want your elected official to do - vote for or against the bill? Make a commitment to support legislation? Asking your legislator or their staff member to do something specific will help you know how successful your visit has been!



## 4. DURING THE MEETING

**Be prompt and patient.** Be sure to show up on time for your appointment, and be patient - it is not uncommon for legislators to be late or to have your meeting interrupted by other business.

**Keep it short and focused!** You may not have a lot of time to meet with your legislator. Make the most of that brief time by sticking to your topic. Bring up any personal, professional or political connections to the legislator that you may have.

**Start the meeting by introducing yourselves** and thanking the legislator for any votes they have made in support of your issues, and for taking the time to meet with you. (see the voting records on page X of this toolkit)

**Stick to your talking points!** Stay on topic, and back them up with no more than five pages of materials that you can leave with your legislator. Provide personal and local examples of the impact of the legislation. This is the most important thing you can do in your meeting.

**Saying "I don't know" can be a smart political move.** You need not be an expert on the topic you are discussing. If you don't know the answer to a question, it is fine to tell your legislator that you will get that information for them. This gives you the chance to put your strongest arguments into their files, and allows you to contact them again about the issue. Never make up an answer to a question - giving wrong or inaccurate information can seriously damage your credibility!

**Set deadlines for a response.** Often, if a legislator hasn't taken a position on legislation, they will not commit to one in the middle of a meeting. If they have to think about it, or if you are meeting with a staff member, ask when you should check back in to find out what your legislator intends to do about your request. If you need to get information to your legislator, set a clear timeline for when this will happen. That way, you aren't left hanging indefinitely.



## 5. AFTER THE MEETING

Right after the meeting, compare notes with everyone in your group to compare what the legislator committed to do and what follow up information you committed to send.

Each person who took part in the meeting should promptly send a personal thank you letter to the legislator.

Follow up in a timely fashion with any requested materials and information. If the legislator or staff member doesn't meet the deadline for action you agreed to during the meeting, ask him or her to set another deadline. Be persistent and flexible!

**After your meeting with the State Legislator, complete this form to report how the meeting went.** Knowing what arguments your legislator used, what issues are important to them, and what positions they take will help us make our legislative strategy more effective!



# ENGAGING OTHER CONSTITUENTS

Inviting 1-4 other constituents to the meeting can let your legislators know that there are other voters in their district that care about these issues. If you don't know any other people that may be in their district, Lift Louisiana may be able to provide you with a list of constituents to invite. Keep a list of constituents that have agreed to attend the meeting and send that list to the legislative staff before the meeting.

## **Example of an email to invite constituents**

Dear [Name],

I would like to invite you to attend a meeting with your State Representative [Name] on [Date]. The meeting will be held at [Location].

Representative X was elected in 2015 and began serving District X in the 2016 Legislative Session. Since elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives, she has filed bills related to taxation, budget and training for early learning center employees. She serves on the Commerce Committee, Education Committee and the Municipal, Parochial and Cultural Affairs Committee.

The meeting with Representative [Name] will be an opportunity to discuss [issues].

Please join me to encourage Rep. [Name]'s support on these critical issues. RSVP with your name and address to [your email] or [your phone number] by [Date].

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

# MEETING ATTENDANCE

MEETING DATE \_\_\_\_\_

STATE SENATOR/REPRESENTATIVE NAME		STAFF NAME	
<< MEETING ATTENDEES >>			
#	NAME	EMAIL	ADDRESS
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

# TIPS FOR TALKING WITH LEGISLATORS

- Tell a personal story
- If you have family, social, business or political ties, mentioning them may help you make a strong connection with your legislator.
- Let your legislator know if you are working with a coalition on the issue, or if you are representing members of your organization.
- Be clear about what your position is and exactly what you want your legislator to do. If talking about specific legislation, identify the legislation by bill number and author.
- Be firm on your position and remember that it is OK to disagree, but don't argue or threaten your legislator if they disagree with your stand.

## Leave Behinds

Give the legislator a “leave behind,” a one-pager with information they need about the issue.



## ABOUT US



**Lift Louisiana's mission is to educate, advocate, and litigate for policy changes needed to improve the health and wellbeing of Louisiana's women, their families, and their communities.**

In the last four decades, Louisiana has ranked one of the highest in the nation in maternal mortality, unplanned pregnancies, teen birth rates, sexually transmitted infections, and other poor health indicators for women and children. Yet Louisiana has consistently supported policies and regulations aimed at creating insurmountable barriers to reproductive healthcare access and sexual health education instruction in schools. Some of the policies enacted in recent years have threaten people's access to services including preventative care, health screenings, birth control, and abortion services. It's time to push back and promote a policy agenda that improves outcomes for women and families in our state.

### Our Solutions

- **Educate:** We provide people with free training, information, and advocacy tools to enable them to discover their own voices on the issues affecting women's health and overall wellbeing in their communities.
- **Advocate:** We engage in direct and grassroots advocacy efforts to influence policies that will improve women's health and overall wellbeing.
- **Litigate:** We provide legal representation for medical providers and individuals to secure access, availability, and viability of reproductive healthcare services.

# THE POWER OF WOMEN

**MULTIPLIED, MOBILIZED, MOTIVATED  
TO CHANGE LOUISIANA**



**A POWERFUL NETWORK OF WOMEN SOLVING  
ISSUES AT THE LOCAL, STATE AND NATIONAL  
LEVELS, TURNING OUT TO VOTE, SUPPORTING  
WOMEN TO RUN FOR OFFICE**

## JOIN US TODAY!

You may already be a part of many groups, pulled in a **thousand different directions**, and feel **overwhelmed** by the problems we face. But 10,000 Women wants to help you focus, simplify and **make it easy to know what's going on** in politics from the **school board** to the **state capitol**.

## WHAT WE DO



### ADVOCACY TRAININGS

Curated educational sessions on advocating on issues affecting women.



### LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

10,000 Women offers you the opportunity to meet like-minded women who are ready to change the world.



### WISDOM, WINE & WOMEN

Policy discussions with experts on issues that affect you and your family.



### WOMEN ON WEDNESDAY

A weekly legislative briefing and active advocacy event during the legislative sessions at the Capitol.



### POLICY ALERTS

Throughout the year, there are numerous decisions made on all levels of government that affect us as women. We will make sure you are in the know.



info@10000womenla.org



<https://www.10000womenla.org>

# RESOURCE LIBRARY



## FACT SHEETS AND TALKING POINTS

Find fact sheets and talking points on critical issues.

[MORE INFO](#)



## VOTING RECORDS

See how your legislator voted on critical issues like abortion, contraception, LGBTQ+ rights, and more.

[2022 LEGISLATION](#)



## LEGISLATOR CONTACT INFORMATION

The following links will give you the district office addresses, telephone numbers, fax numbers, and email addresses of your legislators.

[HOUSE MEMBERS](#)

[SENATE MEMBERS](#)

# MORE RESOURCES

## IT'S TIME FOR LOUISIANA TO RAISE THE WAGE

As workers struggle to keep up with rising costs, Louisiana continues to be one of only five states without a state minimum wage. This means many workers in our state continue to work for the \$7.25 federal minimum wage

## THE MATERNAL HEALTH CRISIS AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH, RIGHTS, AND JUSTICE

Raises awareness of why the maternal mortality crisis persists, what needs to happen to end the crisis, and how protecting abortion care access is connected to advancing maternal health.

## MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT COMPREHENSIVE SEX EDUCATION

Research Contradicts Misinformation and Distortions

## CONTRACEPTIVE ACCESS IN LOUISIANA

States Can Improve Contraceptive Access, Here's What Louisiana is Doing

## ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR WOMEN AND FAMILIES IN LOUISIANA

In order to advance economic security for women and families in Louisiana, policymakers should prioritize policies that ensure economic equality and health care access for all.

## THE DANGER OF LAWS CRIMINALIZING PREGNANCY OUTCOMES

Allowing the government to strip away liberty based on pregnancy status opens the door to expansive public intrusions in personal decisions throughout pregnancy and childbirth.