

SETTING UP YOUR IFAM 2016 IN-DISTRICT ADVOCACY MEETING(S)

1. Find out who your Representatives and Senators are at www.house.gov and www.senate.gov. (You can also find their office phone numbers and emails here)
2. Contact the scheduler in your Congressperson's **DISTRICT** office and ask for an appointment with the Member or the Legislative Assistant.
3. Start calling to set up your appointment **3 weeks in advance**. Note: You may need to fax your appointment request; follow the directions of the scheduler.
4. Tell the scheduler the date and times you are available, the issues you want to discuss and who will be present during the visit.
5. Confirm the visit by phone a day or two before the appointment

MEETING TIPS

Be Prepared: You can help ensure a positive meeting by taking time to prepare.

- Learn more about immigration reform, and study the talking points. Reflect upon why it's important to you, and if you have any personal stories you could share during the meeting.
- Learn about your legislator's positions by reviewing past votes and statements on the issue, and try to anticipate what kind of questions the legislator will ask and/or reasons the legislator may already support/oppose your asks. It helps to have responses prepared for opposing arguments and tying the issues into how they affect your local community.
- Use the task sheet provided (next page) to organize who will be speaking during the meeting

Respect Their Time: Your legislators and their staff have packed schedules, so make sure to show up on time, stay on your points, and keep the meeting concise.

Make Clear Requests For Action: For each issue you address, include a clear, actionable request for the legislator. For example, "We'd like the Senator to support x bill." If you are not able to meet the Congressperson directly, relay the "ask" to the staff member. The staff plays an invaluable role in shaping a legislator's agenda and position on issues.

Stay Honest and Positive: Be positive, friendly and thankful to your legislator and the staff with whom you meet. It is common for a legislator to be late or interrupted, so remain calm and flexible. You may not agree with the legislator's stances on issues; remain respectful, but convey your talking points. Most importantly **do not** make up facts or stories; it is okay to say you do not know an answer to a question or offer to follow-up with an answer via email.

Follow-up: After the meeting send a thank you letter to the legislator expressing your appreciation for their time and any support they showed you during the meeting. Send additional information if you promised to do so. It's helpful to think of this meeting as the beginning of a relationship, so stay in touch with your legislator and track their responses to the issues! If the legislator takes action, express your gratitude. If the legislator does not take action ask for an explanation. **Last but not least, take a photo with your legislator to send to ISN (info@ignatiansolidarity.net), share it on social media using #IFAM16, and send a report-back from the meeting at ignatiansolidarity.net/advocacy**