



ADVISOR INFORMATION: SCHEDULING A MEETING WITH YOUR STATE SENATOR & REPRESENTATIVE

Step 1: Identify your state senator and state representative.

Go to <http://www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/> and enter your schools physical address. A page will appear with all your U.S. and State representatives and senators. Identify your STATE SENATOR and your STATE REPRESENTATIVE. Their contact information or links to their websites will be provided on that page.

Step 2: Call your state senator's office and your state representative's office - *Do this at least two weeks prior to "Day at the Capitol," if not sooner.*

Using the information identified in "Step 1," call your state representative and state senator's office. Ask for the person handling education issues. Tell them you will have FFA members attending Agricultural Education and Texas FFA "Day at the Capitol" and the date you will be on site. If you are bringing a large group of students, you may only want to take a few to this meeting. Three to seven students is ideal.

Let them know that you would like for your students to meet with the Senator or Representative.* Working around your tour time, schedule that meeting time through the legislator's scheduler. Be sure not to schedule the two meetings (Senator and Representative meetings) too close together.

Give yourself time to travel between offices. The capitol is very busy during the legislative session.

** Because the Legislative session schedule can be very fluid, the staff will probably be reluctant to guarantee a meeting with the legislator. That is not a problem. Schedule a time that they recommend to you that day as long as it meets your schedule.*

Step 3: Prepare to bring a gift to the meeting.

You should prepare to bring a gift to your State Senator and State Representative. This doesn't need to be a fancy or "big" gift. Something small and unique to your chapter, school, community or region would be a nice token of appreciation. An example may be an FFA t-shirt signed by the officers or an FFA pillow. Be as creative as you want, but remember that your small gift will represent your chapter to your district leaders.

Step 4: Prepare your students for the meeting (They should wear Official Dress.)

Your students are your best indication / example of your program. Ensure your students are knowledgeable about the legislative process and their role at this meeting. Prepare them to "do the talking" and to ask the questions. Well prepared FFA members in official dress never cease to impress.

Step 5: Review your Briefing Sheet

The Texas FFA will provide a briefing sheet with important bullet points / topics for your meeting with your legislators. This will be emailed to you a week or two prior to Day at the Capitol. This will be simple facts and figures you may want to have handy for your legislator. Remember, your main purpose is to simply make your senator and representative aware of your program, how it contributes to the education and development of students, and all the wonderful opportunities your chapter provides for the future leaders in the district.

Step 6: Call a few days prior to Confirm the Meeting

You may want to check and see if the legislator's schedule is finalized.

Step 7: Be on time for the Meeting

It is likely that some of you, despite your planning, will not be able to meet your legislator. They may be called into a special committee meeting just hours before you arrive. If this happens, do not be upset. Simply visit with the staff just as you would with the representative or senator. Leave your gift for the legislator. If possible, be sure to take a photo with your representative for a press-release.

Making an impression on key legislative staff members has as much or more impact as meeting with the senator or representative. Also, legislative staff usually know the nuts and bolts of the legislative process as much as the legislator for whom they work.

Step 8: Invite your State Representative or Senator to any Chapter Banquets or Functions

Remember your legislators are here to serve your district. Be sure and invite them to your banquets or functions showcasing your program. Even if all you do is invite them to visit your program and tour your facilities, it is a nice gesture.

Step 9: Follow up with a Thank-You note.

Upon your return home, be sure that you mail a nice thank-you note to your state representative and senator. This is a must. If you do a press-release for "Day at the Capitol" that is published in your local paper, mail a clipping to your Representative and Senator as well -- especially if the clip mentions your meeting with them.

Step 10: Stay in Touch

Your meeting is a great way for you and your chapter to establish a relationship with your legislators. Keep in touch with them. During non-legislative years, be sure and invite them to your events as they will be more available during those times. Use this introductory meeting as a way to open more doors to your representative and senator. Let them know they can call on you if they need anything as well. It is a two-way street.

Special Note: If you are bringing more than 10 students, you should notify the legislative office on your call. They may be interested in setting up a picture for the legislator and your students if you have a large number.