

July 2015 Monthly Action

Arrange to Meet with Legislators (or staff) in August

Congress is in recess for the month of August, so your two Senators and one House Member will likely be in their home state for the entire month!

This is your chance to have a sit-down meeting with them or their staff, and to speak with them in-person during town hall type events, promoting their support for the Youth PROMISE Act HR 2197 (Senate Bill coming soon!).*

Arranging the meeting

- Confer with your team and/or other allies about general preferences of date and time of day (based on your legislators' availability, your meeting time might not jibe with all team members' schedules).
- Find the contact information for each of your legislators on their websites (you may wish to divide them up among your team).
- Make contact with the scheduler in the local office, and let them know (by phone and/or in writing) that you wish to meet with your legislator during August, if they are in town.
- If a sit-down meeting with the legislator is not available,
 - Arrange to meet with a staff-member instead, and also
 - Find out when and where the legislator will hold town-hall-type forums, where you might meet in-person. Then:
 - Have a question ready that you can ask during the event
 - Look for an opportunity to engage after the event in conversation with the legislator, and give them materials

Preparation

- By now you and your team may be pretty familiar with the Youth PROMISE Act, but you can continue to review materials on our website, and practice Laser Talks and role-plays to warm up.
- Review the sample meeting agenda outline on the back of this sheet, and decide with your team how you will organize your time.
- Be clear about what you will ask for – in most cases it will be co-sponsorship of a bill, but you may want something “more” (see examples on the next page), or something “less” – like getting back to you with a clear list of any questions or concerns about the bill.

*If you are also keen to support the Department of Peacebuilding Bill, HR 1111, or another piece of legislation or policy, it is of course your choice to do so. You may be more effective with a narrower scope, but it is up to you to find your own perfect balance between focus and inclusiveness.

Sample Meeting Outline:

1.) Thank you/ Introductions – 5-6 minutes

- a. Thank your member of Congress for the meeting. If applicable, thank your member for an action that he or she has done that you appreciate.
- b. Ask a question that will allow the member and aide to introduce themselves more fully. This helps establish a real connection. For example, you can ask, “What brought you to Congress? What was your vision for entering politics?”

2.) Introduction to the Legislation – 2-3 minutes

- a. Basic background/ overview of the purpose and effect of the bill(s). (See materials on our website, including past action sheets, if needed).

3.) Share your individual experiences and emphases.

- a. Why are the bill’s purpose and specific provisions compelling to each of you?

4.) Welcome feedback, questions, or comments from member of Congress and staff regarding the bill or issue.

5.) Requests

- a. ***Become a co-sponsor of the bill?***
- b. Attend the briefing on the bill scheduled for _____?
- c. Write a letter to your colleagues? To the committee chairs that the bill has been referred to?
- d. Speak at a public event within the district?
- e. Write an op-ed for a local newspaper? (You might offer to draft something for them)
- f. What else do you or your staff think you could do to help us get this legislation enacted?

6.) Wrap-up

- a. ***Set up follow-up plan with contact information and expected response times.***
- b. Thank them for their time and attention.