

# VISITING YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS

## MAKING AN APPOINTMENT



Meeting with members of Congress, or their staff, is an important way to educate them about the issues that are important to transgender people.

Making an appointment to meet with them is generally a simple process, although it may require some follow up on your part.

## IDENTIFYING YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

You can find your Representative and Senator by visiting our “Educate Congress” web page at [http://nctequality.org/Visit\\_Legislators.html](http://nctequality.org/Visit_Legislators.html). Enter your zip code to get more information.

You can also visit the House of Representatives website at <http://www.house.gov> and enter your zip code to find your Representative; the Senate website lists the Senators by state at <http://www.senate.gov>.

## DECIDE WHERE YOU WANT TO MEET— IN WASHINGTON OR IN YOUR HOME DISTRICT

Legislators have offices in both Washington and in their home states or districts. Which office a Congressperson is working from generally depends on the time of year, day of the week, and whether Congress is currently in session. For example, Congress is generally not in session during the month of August, so your Congressperson is more likely to be at her or his state or district office at that time. Most maintain a regular schedule of time in local offices, such as Mondays and Fridays or one week a month.

Members of Congress also regularly meet with constituents in their Washington, DC offices. You can find congressional schedules on their web sites.

FOR INFORMATION, PHONE AND FAX NUMBERS AND SCHEDULES:  
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: <http://www.house.gov>  
THE SENATE: <http://www.senate.gov>

---

**REQUEST AN APPOINTMENT**

Meetings usually need to be requested in writing—faxes are preferred as mail has to go through an extensive terrorism screening process, which can take over a month. NCTE has provided a sample meeting request letter at the end of this fact sheet for you to fax. It is best to request a meeting well in advance, preferably weeks ahead of time.

---

**FOLLOW UP**

You may need to be persistent in following-up until an actual meeting is confirmed. Call the offices to speak with the scheduler and politely request to confirm a time for your meeting

They are usually not trying to avoid you—they may be overwhelmed with requests for meetings in an already packed schedule, so keep trying. If you speak to a scheduler, be sure to get her or his name in case you need to call back. Be persistent—it will pay off.

---

**IF THEY OFFER YOU AN APPOINTMENT WITH A STAFF MEMBER INSTEAD OF THE MEMBER OF CONGRESS**

If your member of Congress is not available to meet with you, you may be asked to meet with a staff person instead. This is not a negative thing. Legislators rely a great deal on their staffs and receive detailed reports on every visit they do with constituents. So, while meeting with the actual member of Congress is ideal, meeting with staff people is also extremely helpful. If you find the staff to be helpful, write to your Congressperson to let him or her know that you appreciated the staff's courtesy. Also, keep in mind that occasionally something unforeseen comes up and, even if you were expecting to meet with the actual legislator, you may see a staffer instead.

Often meeting with a staff member first, or even several times, can help you get in to see the actual member of Congress in the future. Remember that staff members can be very important in shaping legislation and policy, so do meet with them.

---

**IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE OR HAVE OTHER QUESTIONS**

Please contact NCTE for additional assistance if you need it. We would be glad to work with you to help you meet with your member of Congress. We can provide information and assistance to you to help make the meeting a success. We also want to know how the meeting went so that we can better understand the positions that your Representative and Senators are taking.

---

**IF YOU ARE PARTICIPATING IN NCTE'S LOBBY DAYS**

If you are scheduling an appointment with your members of Congress as part of NCTE's Lobby Day, please let us know the specific time of your meeting to help us coordinate the overall schedule and so that we can help connect you with others from your district who may also be seeking an appointment.

# SAMPLE REQUEST FOR A MEETING

Your Name  
Address  
City, State and Zip Code

Date

Attn: [Name of Scheduler, if known]  
The Honorable [Name of Senator or Representative]  
Member of Congress  
Washington, DC 20515  
Fax: [fax number]

Dear Ms./Mr. [Name of scheduler]:

I am writing to request an appointment for several constituents and I to speak with Congressman/  
Congresswoman \_\_\_\_\_ in [Washington DC or the name of town where office is] to discuss fed-  
eral legislation to protect transgender people from discrimination.

[Edit this paragraph to request a meeting time; you may need to request a specific date or you may be  
flexible; here are some examples.] My preference would be for [dates], but we can certainly be flexible  
for the Congressman's/Congresswoman's schedule -OR- I will be in Washington, DC on Tuesday, April  
15 and would be available any time during the day for a meeting.

Also joining me at the meeting will be:

- Name, title and address for each attendee

Please let me know when the Congressman/Congresswoman might be available. I will follow up with  
you in a few days if I have not heard back.

Thank you,

[Sign here]

Your name  
Your e-mail address  
Your Telephone Number