

LOBBYING: TOWN HALLS



During the Town Hall

Prepare thoughtful arguments, specific points, good data, and a clear agenda. Ask short questions that focus on a limited number of issues. Decide in advance if you are okay with talking to media and plan your key messages.

Bring your personal story. Limit your story to about two minutes, explaining why the issue is so important to you personally and how it can make a difference for you and others like you.

Go in groups. Participate with your chapter, coalition partners, or another group. It's hard for a legislator to ignore a mass of like-minded people with the same agenda. Sit separately to distribute support throughout the room.

Find staff members beforehand, and ask if there is a queue to register to ask a question.

Speak respectfully. Don't bring disrespectful signs or stand near people who have them.

Hold your ground. Don't allow the elected official to dodge your question. Maintain a respectful insistence, and never interrupt a speaker, whether a legislator, staffer, or attendee.

Remember all the communities you represent. You can be part of a company, advocacy or social or racial justice group.

After the Town Hall

Content from the National Council on Aging and PFLAG.

Reinforce your presence and comments by following up after a town hall meeting with a phone call or email to the office of your elected official. Make sure to thank the organizers of the town hall. Send the legislative assistant one of our policy one pagers to make sure they have information on your issue.

Keep showing up at town hall meetings and displaying interest, and it will be hard for you to be ignored.

Share details about your experience at the town hall with friends, family, and on social media. Do not make any statements supporting or opposing political parties, per 501(c)(3) guidelines.