

Prepare Leave-Behinds

Whenever you meet with legislators, you should always bring something to “leave behind” that represents your group and perspective on the issue.

- The core message should be clear and concise
- If possible, use your congregation’s letterhead
- Make sure your specific ask is clear

At the Meeting

- Make sure you arrive early. It makes a good impression and allows for last minute preparations
- Keep track of your time
- Stick to your plan
- Be sure to take notes
- Ask clarifying questions if you do not understand or wish to hear something said another way.
- Use official bill names
- Be prepared to pivot when necessary

After the Meeting

It’s important to politely follow up with your legislators and to be vocal about your recent visit to your state’s capital

- Send a thank you note to your legislators
- Post about your visit on social media, and make sure to be positive!
- Stay in touch with your legislators after your visit through letters, emails, phone calls, and future visits. It’s important to build connections.
- Debrief with your team, and thank everyone for their hard work, being sure to encourage continued advocacy.



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How to Make a Visit to Your State Capitol



**ELCA Southeastern
Synod Advocacy Office**

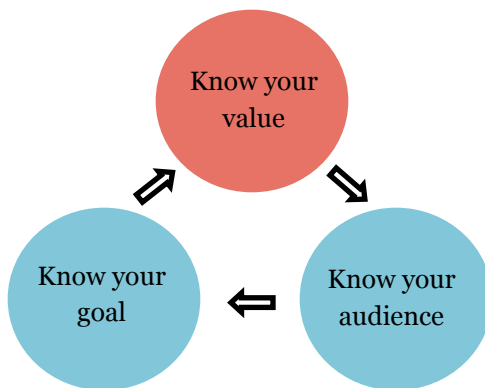
<https://www.facebook.com/sesadvocacy/>

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

— *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Why bother?

- We are called in our baptismal covenant to strive for justice and peace
- Congregations can and should be a voice for justice for the vulnerable, the under-served, and the under-valued in their community
- Public Policy impacts lives, and advocacy impacts Public Policy.
- It is beneficial to build a positive relationship with your legislators.



Your Value

Know that your voice has great value

- You are a constituent
- Your position/circle of influence with other constituents is important
- Personal stories are powerful
- Your faith-values connect

Before the Meeting

- Do your homework
- Know your Goal
- Know your legislator
- Know your Policy Basics
 - Official Bill Name
 - Competing versions
 - Your Position
 - Impact on your community
 - The other side's strongest argument
- Practice, Practice, Practice

Know Your Legislators

It's important to do your homework and know who you're going to be speaking with before you make a visit. A good impression is just as important as a well put together presentation.

- Remember your legislator has values
- Know his/her position on the issue
- Know what topics to avoid
- Always be gracious

Find Your State Legislators

https://openstates.org/find_your_legislator/

Find your members of Congress

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members>