

March Fourth - FAQs on Meeting with Congress Members

Here are detailed steps to follow for a successful meeting with your member of Congress!

1. Request the meeting with the office of your member of Congress

- Visit your senator / representative's official website and use the "request / schedule a meeting" link. For offices without that function, you can contact the office and ask for the scheduler. Explain you are a constituent and would like to discuss the federal assault weapons ban. (US Senate Bill 25, US House Bill 698)

2. Prepare for your meeting:

- Most meetings last up to 30 minutes and are with a legislative staff member, not the member of Congress. The staffers play critical roles in crafting legislation and informing votes and they relay back the constituent asks to their member of Congress.
- Practice your introduction to ensure brevity and greatest impact.
- Ensure you come prepared with a clear ask.
- Don't try to be an expert on assault weapons or firearm semantics. Be confident in politely voicing your opinion.
- If in person, dress professionally. Arrive 5 minutes early. If you have a virtual meeting, ensure no technology complications in advance.
- If in person, you may bring a couple of other constituents with you - just ensure you delegate one person to "lead" the meeting.

3. Meeting format:

- Brief introductions: why you are here and why this topic is important to you.
- Your ask: for co-sponsorship of the bill or, if they already co-sponsor the bill, for action to be taken on the bill (i.e. get it to the floor for a vote!)
- Staff Introductions: They explain their role and kick off discussion
- Discussion: Share your key points and ask questions.
 - It is OK to get emotional. It is not okay to be threatening. Remember these are people who work for a member of Congress and we do owe them respect while we passionately deliver our messages.
- Closing - Revisit your ask and request a followup after they discuss the topic further with the member of Congress.
- Following meeting: write notes so you remember key points made during the meeting.
- Follow-up thank yous - email the staffer and thank them for their time and reiterate your ask for the assault weapons ban and for a followup after they discuss further with the member of Congress.

Keep scrolling for more info on the next page regarding talking points during the meeting!



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Key points to stick to:

- Gun violence is the leading cause of death for children in America. Share your support for one solution: a federal assault weapons ban (AWB). Gun violence is a public health crisis we must address.
- There were 70% fewer mass shooting fatalities during the previous 10 year long AWB, we know this saves lives.
- Weapons of war belong in the military; we don't have tanks in our driveways and we don't need assault weapons in civilian hands.
- 30% of firearms (about one third) used in mass shootings were purchased within one month of the shooting (The Violence Project); Reinstating the AWB will reduce fatalities due to mass shootings and help prevent the next mass shooting
- For offices that express differing viewpoints:
 - "What would it take to get you to support it? Let's not wait for a tragic mass shooting in X state"
 - "How many of your constituents would need to voice their support for this ban for your boss to change their mind?"
 - "If a child dies in America, the MOST LIKELY REASON is because they were shot. Banning assault weapons won't fix gun violence, but it will make a dent in mass shooting prevention."
- Click [here](#) for more detailed information on talking points in support of the AWB and gun violence statistics.

***Don't take the bait.** Sometimes staff may introduce topics or ask questions that distract from your core ask or muddle the issue. Remember that it really is as simple as banning the manufacturing and sale of assault weapons.

Always bridge/pivot back to the original message. You do not need to be an expert on their distraction topic. (i.e. "how you define an assault weapon is not my expertise, I am asking that all of these weapons of war not be manufactured or sold as the bill specifies.")

Here are links to the bills:

[S.25 - Assault Weapons Ban of 2023](#)

[H.R. 698 - Assault Weapons Ban of 2023](#)

LASTLY: feel free to email us with an overview of your meeting by sending a note to hello@wemarchfourth.org - subject line: MEETING FEEDBACK