

Trócaire

Top Tips for lobbying your TDs

Prepare

Make a note of your key points and bring this with you. The meeting may be as short as 10 minutes, so have a maximum of three key points you would like to get across in your meeting. If there is a resource that you can bring that would be helpful, Trócaire may have a policy paper on the issue or you may have seen an article that backs up your argument that you could leave with the politician.

Learn about your politician

It's worth finding out some information about your politician so you can tailor your argument.

Some key things to try and find out are:

- If they are a member of a party, what is their party's position on the issue you are lobbying them on?
- Do they hold a key position of power on this issue? For example are they a Minister or a member of an Oireachtas Committee dealing with this issue?

(Ask Trócaire for this info if you can't find it.)

Be polite and friendly

Smile, shake hands and introduce yourself. Listen as well as talk. Be calm but firm. Show your passion but don't get personal or aggressive. Being respectful makes it more likely for your message to get across.

You don't have to be an expert

Remember what is important is that you are a constituent who cares deeply about this matter and as your representative; you would like them to take up this issue. Depending on the issue the politician may not be that well informed about it, so state your case and your ask(s) clearly and confidently.

Strength in numbers

If you can its best to do this with another person(s). You can split up the tasks, one person might introduce why you are concerned about the issue and the other list the key asks and end by asking the politician to commit to following up with you after the meeting.

Emphasis the local

Let them know where you live, that you are their constituent and if there is something you have in common with the politician mention that.

Be concise and stay on point

Put your message across as clearly as you can. Don't be afraid to make your main points a couple of times in different ways. If the TD wants to talk about something else or gets into a discussion that you don't understand, politely bring the conversation back to the reason why you wanted to meet with them in the first place.

Ask for a clear commitment

It is important to get a concrete commitment from your politician. Ask them to let you know how they have represented your concerns within their party or have followed up on what you have asked them to do. Make sure they have your contact details to do this.

Take a photo and share your meeting on social media

Tell your friends and family about your meeting through Facebook, Twitter or other social media sites. Include a photograph or a quick video if you can. Ask your politician if they would like to be tagged in the tweet/facebook post.

Follow up: Write a letter/email to your politician

Thank them for meeting you and summarise the key commitments and actions your politician agreed to at the meeting.

Good Luck!