



# ADVOCATING FOR A STRONG U.S.-UN PARTNERSHIP:

## How to Meet with Your Member of Congress

Meeting in-person with your Member of Congress or their staff is one of the best ways to effectively communicate and advocate for the United Nations. In-person meetings make your advocacy more personal and allow you to build a relationship with the office staff which can help with your future advocacy. Setting up and attending a meeting with your Member of Congress can seem overwhelming and intimidating but remember, your elected officials want to hear from their constituents and learn what issues are important to them! Most importantly, UNA-USA is here to support you with guidance and resources that will help you to execute your meeting successfully.



**UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION  
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

1750 Pennsylvania Avenue NW,  
Suite 300 Washington, D.C. 20006  
+1 202 887-9040

Twitter & Facebook: @UNAUSA  
Instagram: @UNA.USA  
unausa.org | #USAforUN

## 1. Getting Started

- **Who and Where:** Not sure who your Member of Congress (MOC) is or the best place to meet with them? Not a problem. You can find out by visiting [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) and [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov). Each MOC has an office Washington, DC and (typically) several local offices located throughout the district or state.
- **Reach out to UNA-USA:** We want to know about your advocacy efforts and help make the process as simple as possible. Contact us and we will provide you with helpful tips and information such as talking points and suggestions for best times to meet with your MOC.

## 2. Setting Up Your Meeting

- **Contact the Scheduler:** The best way to set up a meeting is to go through the process set up by each congressional office. You can check on the Member's website for instructions to request a meeting or can call the office directly and ask the receptionist how to set up a constituent meeting. Once you know how to make a request, be ready to provide the following information:
  - Who you are and where you are from
  - The issue that you would like to address during the meeting
  - Desire to meet with the Congressperson or a relevant staffer
  - Your contact information
- **Following Up:** If you don't hear back after several days, you can reach out again by email or phone. Remember to be polite and refer to your first communication and reasons for wanting to meet with the Member.
- **Confirm the meeting:** Once your meeting has been scheduled, call a few days before the meeting to confirm that the appointment is still on the books.

### 3. Before the Meeting

- **Review the Talking Points and Briefing Book:** Use the [Talking Points](#) and the [Briefing Book](#) to update yourself on the issues you'll be discussing. These meetings should be brief – no more than 15-20 minutes. You probably won't be able to talk about all the UN issues you care about, but that's okay! At the end of the meeting, the staff or Member should remember one thing: I have a constituent that supports the UN and wants me to support the UN too.
- **Decide who is speaking and when:** The individual who lives in the Members' district/state should be the person that speaks first. If more than one person falls into this category, discuss among your group who might be a good candidate to get the conversation started. From there, decide the order in which members of your group should speak.
- **Know your elected officials:** Do some quick online research to learn more about your Members of Congress – including what committees they serve on and past remarks they've made about the UN. In addition, checking their Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram accounts are helpful ways to see what issues are most recently on their minds.

### 4. During the Meeting

- **Remember to have fun!** This isn't a test. These meetings are a unique and exciting opportunity to share your passion with your elected officials. Your goal isn't to "win" the meeting.
- **Introduce yourself and UNA:** When you meet the Congressperson or staff member, remember to introduce yourself, provide your name, and give them a little background on UNA.
- **Talk about what your chapter does:** Members of Congress are interested in what goes on in their districts/states. Let them know there's a robust constituency of UN supporters where they live.
- **Tell them why you care – and if you have a personal UN story:** You may have an interesting first-person account of how the UN has positively affected your life or the life of someone you know. Feel free to share this in your meeting.
- **Make the ask and don't try to cover too much ground:** After going through the Talking Points, make the ask: "I'm asking you to fully fund our UN peacekeeping and regular budget dues in FY19." Again, at the end of the meeting, the staffer or Member should remember at least one thing: I have a constituent that supports the UN and wants me to support the UN too.
- **Take a photo to commemorate your visit:** Pictures with a Member of Congress or their staff are a great way to remember your visit. You can post them on Twitter or Facebook after the meeting, allowing you to publicly thank the office for visiting with you. Please ask before taking any photos.

### 5. After the Meeting

- **Send a thank you email:** Send a brief email to the person you met with thanking them for their time and sending them a link to the [Briefing Book](#).
- **Follow up with UNA-USA:** We want to know how the meeting went and if there are any follow-up actions we can help you with. Email [membership@unausa.org](mailto:membership@unausa.org) to provide an update.

### 6. Things Not to Do

- **Become confrontational or mention your party affiliation:** UNA-USA is a non-partisan organization and we try to work with ALL Members of Congress to build support for the UN. Please don't reveal your party affiliation or discuss who you did or didn't vote for, as this can risk alienating an office and/or weaken the effectiveness of your meeting.
- **Don't make up an answer; it's okay not to know:** If you find yourself in your meeting and you're not sure of an answer to a question, it's okay. Just let the person know that either you or someone from the UNA-USA National Office will get back to them with an answer to their question shortly.
- **Don't record audio or video during your meeting:** Congressional offices typically do not want their meetings with constituents videotaped or recorded. Avoid negatively affecting your meeting before it starts by not bringing audio or video recorders.

