

# ADVOCACY TIPS & TOOLS



## MEETING WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

### 1. Plan

- Be proactive. Reach out well in advance and propose multiple meeting times.
- Be clear. Your meeting request should state who you are, why you want to meet and what you wish to speak about in only a few sentences.
- Be flexible. Be open to meeting with the representative's staff or consider coordinating a joint meeting with other organizations or influential members of your community. Joint advocacy can be powerful in conveying a united message and staff are often easier to reach and can be valuable allies.

### 2. Prepare

- Do your research. What is their background? What issues have they spoken about recently or are they already working on? Has their party made any relevant commitments that could reinforce why they should take action on your issue? Securing and having a successful meeting is always easier when you can start from existing common ground.
- Create a 1-2-page backgrounder to send in advance and leave behind after your meeting that summarizes your issue and what you are asking of your representative.
- Decide what your desired outcome is for the meeting and think through how you will respond to any contrary arguments or opposing views that may be presented. Being prepared to address possible barriers to your objective will strengthen your advocacy efforts.

### 3. Execute

- Convey your key messages in plain language. You will likely only have 30 minutes to identify the problem, present a solution and discuss what action your representative can take.
- Outline your constituency of support and demonstrate why your issue is one they should care about – remember many representatives are pressured to act on important issues every day.
- End the meeting with a specific next step identified and leave your business card. Ask if you can take a picture together and post it to social media to publicly thank them for the meeting!

## LETTER WRITING

### 1. Introduce

- Identify who you are and why you are passionate about the issue

### 2. EPIC<sup>1</sup>

- Engage: Get their attention with a dramatic fact or short statement
- Problem: State the problem and present its causes
- Inform: Present solutions and explain why they will make a difference
- Call to Action: Let them know what they can do to help

### 3. Conclude

- Ask for a response and be clear how they can get in touch with you

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<sup>1</sup> For more tips on MP engagement and the EPIC format see [www.results-resultats.ca](http://www.results-resultats.ca).

# DIGITAL ADVOCACY

- **Keep It Simple**
  - Use plain language and simple, short messages. Remember people are scrolling so you want to get their attention and convey your message as clearly as possible.
  - Use pictures or other visuals whenever possible.
  - Try to post during business hours. 9 AM is best for all-day traction on Facebook and Twitter!
- **Connect**
  - Tag both those you want to influence as well as your colleagues and others you think might be interested in supporting your message (@CanPaedSociety).
  - Never start a tweet with an @. This tweets at the account you tagged rather than posting on your profile. Instead, tag in the middle or at the end of your message.
  - There is power in numbers. When many people use a hashtag within a short period of time you can get an issue trending and significantly raise its profile.
- **Share**
  - Use relevant hashtags to help others find and share your post.
  - When sharing posts include a link and add a comment to further the conversation and add your unique voice.
  - Before sharing or re-tweeting always take a moment to make sure the source is reputable and the post is factual.