

Helpful Tips for State Strategy Sessions

Preparing for the Meeting

- Make sure to do your homework.
 - Know with whom you are meeting and about the district they represent. Collect recent local news stories that illustrate your concerns before arriving in Washington, DC and prepare them to be presented to your legislator to support your positions.
- Use the National Council of La Raza's (NCLR) Issue Briefing Day to consolidate your group's concerns and try to link your concerns to the impact they have on the legislator's home district.
- Solicit answers to questions you may have about policies during NCLR's Issue Briefing Day and inform group members in advance to make sure everyone feels comfortable with your presentation. Don't display internal disagreements while meeting with your legislators.
- Discuss ahead of time who in your group will speak on each issue, the order they will speak in, and the amount of time each person should have to do so.
- Recognize ties you may have to a congress member's district through your residency, businesses, or family.

Some Items to Strategize

- **Introduce everyone in your state delegation.**
- **Make sure there is a time-keeper and a note-taker.**
- **Determine who will:**
 - Explain to the legislator/staffer why you asked for the meeting
 - Present priority issues. Get to your bottom line immediately. Be brief, direct, courteous, and positive. When presenting each issue, do not assume that your legislator has any prior knowledge of the subject.
- **For each issue be sure to cover:**
 - Background: Explain the issue in the simplest possible terms.
 - Impact: Explain how the issue directly affects your community or the group you represent.
 - Recommendation: Indicate what you would like your legislator to do.
- **Thank your legislators if they have been supportive.** They get thanked far less than they get criticized. They will appreciate your recognition.
- **Be sure to ask for your legislator's support.** If your legislator already is very supportive, ask him or her to cosponsor the relevant bill and/or take a leadership role in moving the bill through the process, getting additional cosponsors, or other ways.