

HOW TO SET UP A MEETING WITH YOUR U.S. REPRESENTATIVE OR U.S. SENATORS

Setting up meetings with your federal lawmakers is easy and a great way to ask them to support reforms to mandatory minimum sentencing laws. Here is how you can set up a meeting with one of your lawmakers the next time he or she is in your home district or state.

Step 1: IDENTIFY YOUR FEDERAL LEGISLATORS

You have three federal legislators: one U.S. Representative and two U.S. Senators. Here's how to find them:

For U.S. Representatives (you have one):

- Visit <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>
- Enter your ZIP code +4
- Go to your Representative's website and look for the contact information for their district office locations
- Find the district office closest to you – this is the office you want to visit.

For U.S. Senators (you have two):

- Visit http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm
- Look for the two U.S. Senators from your state
- Go to each Senator's website and look for the contact information for their district office locations
- For each Senator, find the district office closest to you – these are the offices you want to visit.

Step 2: CALL THE DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSEST TO YOU

Pick the lawmaker's office that is closest to your home. Always try to meet with the lawmaker. You will have to work with the lawmaker's schedule to do this. They are busy people and travel a lot, so you will have to be flexible. If the lawmaker is not available, ask to meet with the staff member who works on crime and judiciary issues. This staff member will report back to your lawmaker on how your meeting goes. Here's how to ask for a meeting:

By phone:

Call the phone number of the lawmaker's district office that is closest to you, and ask to speak to the scheduler. Then say,

“Hello, my name is [YOUR NAME]. I am a constituent, and I would like to meet with [YOUR LAWMAKER’S NAME] while he/she is home on recess. When might I be able to do that?”

The scheduler may ask you to email or fax a meeting request letter. If so, email or fax a letter similar to the sample on the next page to the scheduler you spoke with, and follow up with phone calls until you get a meeting set. Sometimes, you can request or schedule a meeting online by visiting the lawmaker’s website and filling out and submitting an electronic form. You can find your U.S. Representative’s website online at <http://www.house.gov/representatives/>.

You can find your U.S. Senators’ websites online at http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm.

Sample email or letter requesting a meeting:

[Your name and address]

The Honorable [First name of legislator] [Last name of legislator]
[Lawmaker’s district office address]

Attention: [Name of scheduler]

Dear [Representative or Senator] [Last name]:

I am your constituent and was asked by [name of scheduler you spoke with] to submit this request to meet with you in your [name of city where district office is located] office to discuss sentencing reform issues. I will be joined by [list of people who will be joining you, if any].

The best dates for me to meet are [fill in several dates and/or times]. I will contact you shortly regarding the possibility of scheduling this meeting. In the meantime, you can contact me at [phone number] or [email] if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
[Your Signature]

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