



# TEXAS CANNABIS POLICY CENTER

## Visiting Your Representatives and Senators' Offices

*Before visiting in person, be sure to call to make an appointment to meet with the lawmaker's staff. You will be asked what you'd like to discuss and for your complete contact information. Please have that information handy when you call.*

### Basics:

1. Dress professionally, as though you were going to church or an interview for an office job, and arrive 5-10 minutes early.
2. Have your talking points and notes prepared, including handouts or resources to leave with the office, preferably in a folder.
3. Consider and ask about some of the concerns your legislator may have regarding the specific type of marijuana legalization you are going to discuss. Have counterpoints to common misconceptions in your back pocket in case they are brought forth. If you do not have the knowledge or resources to address your legislator's concern, please make note of their concern, do research on the subject, and follow up. If you say you will follow up with info, you must do so!

### Etiquette Guidelines:

#### **Always**

1. Be courteous and respectful (without gushing).
2. Clearly and simply state the purpose of your visit. If it's about a certain bill, identify it correctly.
3. Use specific examples and a personal story. The most important message is how this is important to you and those you love and support. If you also choose to provide statistics or evidence in support, always make sure it comes from reliable sources.
4. Represent yourself as a voter and constituent of the district, not as a representative of NORML or any other organization. You want your message to count individually.
5. State what you want done, or recommend a course of action.
6. Thank the member or staff for taking the time to meet with you.
7. When addressing your legislator, address them as "Representative/Senator Last Name."

#### **Never**

1. Use vulgarity, profanity, or threats. The first two are unacceptable, and the third one can result in significant trouble, including a visit from the Secret Service. Simply stated, don't let your passion get in the way of making your point.
2. Say that you will follow up with information and fail to do so. This shows a lack of reliability and misses an opportunity to continue the discussion.