

Disciples: Make Advocacy Visits with Your Congress Members in Local Offices Aug.14-31



During the Visit:

Introductions

The Facilitator should start the meeting by thanking the Member for their time, introducing the group as a whole, and then having each person introduce themselves. Each participant should say the faith community they represent to show the power of the group.

Personal Story

Someone should share a story about why Members of Congress should reduce funding for detention and deportation and robustly fund refugee resettlement and assistance abroad.



Disciples & Ecumenical Partners Visit Congressional Leaders in TN.

Make the Ask

Our community welcomes refugees and immigrants, and I urge you to reflect the best of our American values of compassion, hospitality, and welcome. Can we count on you to protect refugee assistance and resettlement from the cuts proposed in Trump's budget request and work to reduce funding for detention, deportation and border militarization? In addition, given the administration's refugee and Muslim ban executive order and the recent Supreme Court decision, I urge you to do everything you can to hold the administration accountable and ensure the U.S. government is continuing the robust resettlement of the most vulnerable refugees.

When they answer, listen well and take notes. While they may not agree with you on all these issues, try to find common ground to continue to work together on. You'll likely not convince them to change their mind in one meeting, but you can intentionally build a relationship that can transform their perspective and stance. Much of advocacy involves listening, and providing opportunities for the member to share their priorities and concerns and ask questions. Look for indications of the members' views, and finding opportunities to provide helpful information or correct misinformation. Members and staff will appreciate the chance to be heard instead of only being talked at. Ask questions and engage in conversation. Answer questions honestly. If you don't know the answer, say that you don't know but you will find out. Assign one person in the group to follow up.

Thank You & Invitation

Thank them and invite them to an upcoming prayer vigil, service, or event you are planning. Offer to be a resource to them, and remember to get the staffers' business cards. Consider asking them to take a photo with your group – most politicians love the photo opportunity!

After the Visit:

Debrief the Meeting

It's important to make sure you and your group are on the same page immediately after leaving the meeting, while the conversation is fresh in your mind. Make sure to leave the office building, so your debrief conversation won't be overheard. As a group, review: What did we hear? Did we get what we wanted? What are the next steps? It's also

important to evaluate your group's work. How did we do as a team? Share the information learned during your meeting with your state coalition, immigrants' rights groups, and other allies.

Follow Up with your Member of Congress

Choose one person to send a follow up email thanking the Member or staff for their time, attaching the documents mentioned, providing answers to questions that came up during the meeting, and continuing to engage the Member and staff in your group's work. You can once again make your case against negative proposals and support for positive immigration legislation, and inviting them to an upcoming event.

Call Washington, DC

The local and Washington, DC offices may not communicate about visits, so it's important to follow up with the DC office as well. The Capitol Switchboard (202) 224-3121 can connect you to the DC offices of your Senators and Representative. Introduce yourself as a constituent and ask for the staffer who works on immigration. Tell them about your meeting with their local office, and ask what they are doing to support positive reforms and defend against proposals that would adversely affect immigrant and refugee communities.



Disciples make visits to Oklahoma leaders.

Tell Us How Your Visit Went!

It's very important for us know about where members stand on immigration reform. After you meet or speak with someone from your Member's local and/or DC offices, please fill out this form: goo.gl/l197BJ or go to <http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/neighbor>. Advocates in DC will then follow up with the DC staff to reinforce your visit and answer any specific questions about legislative proposals. We will also share with you what we are hearing from their DC staff.

Thank you for making these important visits!

[Please go here to report about your visits:](#)

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd8eWUc1tPFk4UkrVaJtib4BaTz8fgvP827qMeW0ZVli9qJpg/viewform>

**[And, contact our Disciples Refugee & Immigration office at:](#)
[Rev. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Director, sstanley@dhm.disciples.org](mailto:sstanley@dhm.disciples.org)
[202-957-7826](tel:202-957-7826)**

A list of all Interfaith Immigration Coalition member organizations and contacts can be found at www.interfaithimmigration.org/about/organizations and www.interfaithimmigration.org/about/contact-information.

You can print out resources from the toolkit and other sources as "leave behinds" for your legislative visits.

Contact Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries Director, Rev. Sharon Stanley-Rea at sstanley@dhm.disciples.org or 202-957-7826) for further consult. And, go to our website here for additional resources and materials: <https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/missions-advocacy/refugee-immigration-ministries/>