

Advocacy Training Resource

Difficult Scenarios at Advocacy Visits



Difficult situations may arise in your advocacy visits, from an inappropriate comment from a lawmaker, to a 501(c)(3) violation, to not having enough time, and everything else in between. While it is hard to anticipate every scenario, below are difficult situations that might arise. To prepare for your meetings, please review the situations with those joining you on the advocacy visit and discuss how best to respond.

What do you do when...?

- Your senator is very, very late getting to her meeting with your delegation. She apologizes but says she only has 10 minutes for you. How do you respond?
- You are meeting with staff and they seem to be in a hurry to get through the information, especially where they disagree with NCJW positions.
- You know your senator or representative agrees with you on all your issues. How do you make the best use of your time during your appointment?
- During a meeting, an NCJW member tells the legislator or staffer the wrong information about NCJW's position on the issue.
- You are meeting with your newly elected representative, who is thrilled to see you and knows many of your delegates personally and wants to chit-chat with them and tell "campaign stories."
- Your senator is known to be supportive of many NCJW issues, but not at all on reproductive rights. He is on the record supporting two of the three key issues but not on ensuring access to abortion. Knowing this, you aren't sure how to approach this issue in your lobby visit.
- You introduced your delegation to your representative and gave some background on NCJW. Just as you are about to have a member present the first issue, your representative launches into a talk about his last trip to Israel and how important it is to have a strong policy that supports Israel.
- You thought you had arranged for a meeting with your senator, but when you arrive, you find that you will be meeting with his staff.
- Your representative wants to argue with your group after every issue is presented and seems determined to convince you that her stance on the issues is the right one. One of the NCJW members is equally determined to argue back and convince her that the NCJW positions are the feelings of her constituents.