

1. Our congressional representatives are there to serve the people. To do their jobs, they need information about what is happening in the district they represent. It is important that members of Congress understand the role of nonprofit organizations. It is important they know how you are serving their constituents. Remember: ***You have information that our U.S. lawmakers need.***
2. When meeting with your congressman, remember to “Keep It Short and Simple” (KISS). Heartbeat staff will make introductions and explain the purpose of the meeting. Please present your business card when being introduced. Heartbeat staff will give a brief explanation of Heartbeat. Heartbeat staff will then introduce pregnancy center staff who will give a brief explanation of the very positive way your nonprofit is impacting the district. Pregnancy center staff will then introduce the client to share her gratitude for the help she received at the center. The 3-5 minute client testimony is the focus of the meeting.
3. When addressing your U.S. Representative, please refer to him/her by using title with last name (e.g. Congressman Cole). Be familiar with the congressional district number and boundaries of the district in your area. Know exactly where your center is located in relationship to the district map: edge of the district, center, or other.
4. Use congressional jargon. We are accustomed to referring to the “clients” and the “community” we serve (e.g. Community Impact Report), but for the purposes of congressional meetings, use “constituents” and “district” (or more specifically District #__).
5. You may be scheduled to meet with the legislative aide (LA). Please remember, it is just as important that they hear your message so they can relay it to the congressman or incorporate it into their future policy decisions.
6. Be sure to use the center’s name when referring to the pregnancy center. (Avoid pronouns.) Refer to the abortion facility as the abortion facility or by name if you are talking about Planned Parenthood.
7. Be prompt (a little early if possible). Be polite, patient and positive.
8. Be positive. USE positive words only. For example: “Pregnancy centers are dedicated to empowering women, preserving maternal health, and protecting child wellbeing.” Please avoid any negative speech. Do not say what you do NOT do. For example: “We do not lock the client in a room and force her to watch graphic videos.” AND, do not say “As soon as we get a client, we kill her with kindness.” The only thing that will be remembered from your meeting by a pro-abortion staffer is the negative word choices. *(Sometimes, pro-life representatives employ staffers that do not share their pro-life position.)* ***Our word choice must be bold in truth but our compassion must be even greater.***

9. Be personable. Since we are Christ-centered in all that we do, remember to be delighted by the opportunity to speak to the member and just as delighted to meet with his/her staff (and even an intern). *We may go in touting the good work of pregnancy centers and come out having ministered to a young staff member who had asked God for help in a private prayer. Keep in mind that some of these legislative aides may have been touched in some way by abortion.*
10. Remember to bring along your camera for a possible picture with your representative. Be prepared with your 60-second pitch for your center as this may be your only chance to speak directly to the Congressman about the positive work you are doing in his/her district. Be ready to hand him/her a business card or an invitation to your upcoming event (banquet).
11. Please ask permission to video record or take pictures during your congressional meeting. Remember to turn off your cell phone (and turn it back on afterwards.)
12. It is important to call ahead to let the scheduler know that you are on your way to the meeting. Call approximately 10 to 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment time.
13. The purpose of your congressional meeting is to inform your elected official about how you are supporting women and strengthening families in the district. Your visits are instrumental in correcting the false and malicious impressions made on congressmen by organizations like NARAL and Planned Parenthood. It is not necessary to mention these bogus accusations. (Remember to stay positive.)
14. While this event is expressly pro-life, we do not intend for any discussion about overturning *Roe V. Wade*, the U.S. Supreme Court's decision that legalized abortion on January 22, 1973.
15. **Be sure to come to the de-briefing lunch prepared to share your feedback and to tell about what was said in your meetings.** Take notes during the meeting and write down specific quotes that impacted you.