

MEET WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

Meeting and developing a personal relationship with your elected representatives and their staffs is the most effective method of lobbying. You can arrange an individual meeting or a group meeting with your elected representative and his or her staff, and you can meet them either in Washington, DC, or at one of their offices in your state or district. To make your meeting as successful as possible, below we provide some steps that you can take:

BEFORE YOUR MEETING

1. Contact Friends of Brad Will so that we can assign you a point person on our staff to provide you any informational materials or support that you might need.
2. Schedule a meeting. At least two weeks before you would like to meet with your representative, fax a letter to the representative's scheduler. You can obtain your representatives' names and phone numbers by googling "Congressional Representative" and clicking on the first site that appears. To get the scheduler's name, simply call your representative's number and ask for the name of the scheduler.
3. Learn about your representative. You can do so by visiting his or her website and doing basic internet research – learn some of his or her biographical information, his/her involvement or response to efforts for accountability for the murder of Brad Will or for systematic and widespread human rights abuses by Mexican security forces, his/her voting record and positions on U.S. policy toward Mexico or Colombia, on military funding and human rights and other subjects, e.g. committee assignments and policy and personal interests.
4. Organize a group (if there are other like-minded constituents within your state or district). Invite key civic, religious, social, professional and political leaders. You can either arrange one large meeting with these leaders of 10-15 people or arrange several smaller meetings spread out over time of 3-5 people each. If you go as a group, assign one person to lead the meeting to ensure that the meeting stays organized and one person to take notes during the meeting to ensure that all participants get a written record of the meeting. Also, make sure that every attendee understands and agrees to the goal of the meeting and has a clear set of points to make during the meeting. Points that speak about the concerns of a leader's specific constituency are particularly effective.
5. Determine your request and reasoning. Know why you're meeting with your representative; if possible, meet about a particular bill. Clarify and write down the reasons that you support or oppose the bill and the reasons that you think your representative should adopt your position. Why is it in your state or district's

interest to adopt your position? Why is it in the representative's interest?

6. Assemble informational materials in support of your position. Search through Friends of Brad Will's and Brad Will's family's website or give our staff point person a call for useful informational materials.

7. Practice what you are going to say. Speakers are most effective when they have rehearsed their material. Practice what you are going to say so that you're as sharp as you can be when the actual meeting takes place. If you have a group, consider holding a practice session prior to the actual meeting.

8. Confirm your appointment one week before the meeting and within 24 hours of the meeting.

AT YOUR MEETING

1. Thank your representative or his or her staff person for meeting with you.

2. Establish a personal connection with your representative or his or her staff person, but don't spend too much time with small talk, as you have limited time and want to be sure to use that time to discuss the issues that you came to discuss.

3. Introduce yourself (If you are with a larger group, have everyone in the group introduce themselves.). Mention that you are a constituent or constituents. Describe your profession(s) and your role(s) in the community.

4. If you are there to support a specific bill, then mention the bill number and give the reasons why you support or oppose the bill and why you think your representative should adopt your position. If you have informational materials in support of your position, give them to your representative and/or his or her staff person.

5. Ask your representative or his or her staff person for his or her thoughts or questions about your request and reasons. Take careful notes on his or her thoughts, questions or concerns.

If he or she is supportive of your request, then ask him or her to assist by speaking out in favor of your position, asking his or her colleagues to support your position, or forwarding informational materials to his or her colleagues. Offer to be a resource to support his or her efforts.

If he or she is opposed to or angered by your request, or makes ill-informed comments, don't get angry or rude in response; just go home and educate more

and more of his or her constituents. The more constituents that he or she hears from, the more likely he or she will learn more about the issue, understand the depth of support among his or her constituents and review his or her positions.

If he or she is noncommittal, then ask what else you can do to help him or her make a commitment, and ask when he or she expects to take a position.

Finally, if he or she wants further information or asks a question to which you don't have an answer, say that you'll get back to him or her with an answer. If you can't easily find the information on our websites within one day of the meeting, then give us a call and we will help you find it.

6. Provide your contact information and request the contact information of your representative or his or her staff person so that you can effectively follow up.

7. End your meeting on a positive note. Thank your representative or his or her staff person for taking the time to meet with you.

AFTER YOUR MEETING

1. Send your representative and/or his or her staff person a thank you letter on the day after the meeting.

2. Fax or email any informational materials that you said you would. If you send an email, request that the recipient(s) confirm that they have received it. If you send a fax, call the office immediately to confirm that they have received it.

3. Follow up with your representative and/or his or her staff person on the issue that you met about and work to develop a relationship. If you are unable to reach the appropriate staff person, then leave a message. Be persistent, but professional, in all of your follow up communications.