

## Activity: Connect with your Representative



**Objective:** Meet with your representative to gain support for a law.

**Leader Prep:** Determine if the goal of the issue is to advocate for a new law or committee at the state or national level. This will help to focus the level of connection your girls are planning to make. This activity will likely involve travel to the state capitol or to the lawmaker's state office. In-person meetings are highly effective, whether you are meeting with the lawmaker or a member of their staff. Be aware that they are most likely to occur during a school day.

**Supplies:**

- Created materials (video, brochures, letters, anything the girls have made)
- Petitions or other supportive documents
- Proposal for new law
- Important statistics
- Elevator pitch
- Safety ratios for travel
- Permission slips

1. In order to connect with your representative in person, you'll need to first determine the most appropriate person with whom to connect. If your goal is to pass a new law or set-up a government committee at the state level, you'll need to connect with your state representative or state senator. If your goal is to pass a new law or set-up a government committee at the national level, you'll need to connect with your federal representative or federal senator. To do this, go to <https://myvote.wi.gov> and select "My Voter Info" at the top of the homepage. At state senate and federal levels, districts are likely to be the same for everyone in your group. Select "My elected officials" and enter one person's address to look up all elected officials in your district. If your goal is to connect with your state representative, you may need to enter more addresses to generate a list of various representatives that may represent you in the State Assembly.
2. Once you have determined with whom you should connect, look up each representative or senator online to get an understanding of their issues and priorities. You may find that one representative or senator is more suited or interested in the law you're trying to pass.
3. Next, set-up a time to meet with your legislator\*. This will likely be on a business day, and may or may not take place when the girls are in school. Girls may wish to engage their parents, teachers or administrators in having this time away from school counted as a unique learning opportunity.
4. To prepare for your meeting, practice important components of any type of business meeting. You may wish to practice shaking hands firmly with an adult member of your family or practice speaking clearly by asking a friend or family member to interview you and provide feedback on your tone and speaking voice. You will also want to prepare yourself for the day of the meeting by making sure you have access to a Girl Scout uniform, compiling materials you've created to advocate for your cause, and being prepared to provide further insight into the issue.
5. At your meeting, you'll pitch your bill to your representative. Remember to be clear, friendly, brief and respectful. Though this representative may not be the person to support your proposal, they will likely introduce you to other people in the legislature who can help move your bill forward. While it is best to have your local representative support your bill, anyone in the legislature can make it happen.

*\*Are you having trouble connecting with your legislator's office? Meeting with a member of your legislator's staff is an appropriate substitute to an in-person meeting with your legislator. If your legislator and their staff are unavailable, don't give up! Identify more contacts in the legislature, while also preparing an envelope full of materials for unavailable elected officials. Be persistent!*

