



HUMAN  
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# No Excuses: Frequently Asked Questions

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**1. *Why should I meet with my Representative or Senator?***

We live in a representative democracy. That means that your elected officials are supposed to represent you. But they can only do that if you are willing to share with them your thoughts about the issues of the day. And if you're not telling them what you think, others surely will.

**2. *Do I need experience to meet with my elected officials?***

No. In fact, often the most moving thing LGB T constituents and their allies can do in these meetings is to share your story, to make it personal so they understand there are real people behind their actions or inactions.

**3. *Why is HRC asking me to set up a meeting now?***

The Human Rights Campaign works every day to connect supporters of equality with their elected officials through our action alerts and web tools. This past year, we invested significant resources into electing more fair-minded Members of Congress and a fair-minded President. But as of today, not one piece of pro-equality federal legislation has been signed into law. That's why we're asking our members, supporters and allies nationwide to meet with Members of Congress to let them know that there are No Excuses for not moving to enact laws supported by the vast majority of Americans to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans.

**4. *What if my elected officials are supportive? Do I still need to meet with them?***

Yes. Even supportive elected officials need to hear from their constituents. And we need our Congressional supporters to know that their constituents want and need them to step up and become leaders on issues of equality.

**5. *And if my representative is never going to vote for pro-equality legislation?***

It's also important that you meet with vocal opponents of equality. You never know what personal connection or story is going to resonate and help change their mind. And they need to know there are real voters in their district who support equality and watch how they vote.

**6. *How do I request a meeting with my Senator or Representative?***

It's easy. Use our [online toolkit](#) to find out how and to download tools like a sample Meeting Request Letter.

**7. What happens if my Member is not available to meet with me but staff are?**

Quite often a good meeting with a member's staff can be just as impactful as meeting with the member her/himself. The staff person will likely spend more time with you, giving you the opportunity to make a more personal connection, and to get good information on where the Member actually stands on issues and why.

**8. What would I be talking about?**

It's your meeting, and you should talk about your own experiences and why equality matters to you.

You might talk about how you hope to get married some day. Or your fear of losing your job just for being a lesbian. Or your concern that your LGBT son or daughter faces bullying at school. Or as an LGBT parent, that not having full access to the federal benefits of marriage, you can't adequately protect your spouse and your family.

We are working with Members of Congress to outlaw workplace discrimination and repeal the Defense of Marriage Act and more. Telling a story from your personal experience that ties into one of HRC's [legislative priorities](#) is helpful. But the most important thing is to create a personal connection with your elected officials or their staff members.

**9. Can I find out where my Representative or Senator stands before I go?**

Yes. Find out where your elected officials stand on LGBT issues by [clicking here](#) and entering your state and ZIP Code. If your ZIP Code is split between two representatives, you may need to enter your full address.

**10. Do I have to do this all by myself?**

No. You can invite others to join you for a meeting. Ask your partner, your parents, your neighbors, your clergy person, members of your tennis team or bridge club... You get the idea. The ideal group size is anywhere from one to six people. Of course, it's helpful to have your group lined up before you try to schedule an appointment. If you do add folks after a meeting is scheduled, make sure to inform the office before you show up for your meeting.

**11. If a few of us go to the meeting, who talks?**

While each of you should have a voice, it's important to make sure that you cover different territory. It's always best to meet a little before your meeting and make sure that everyone understands their role in the meeting. This will help everyone get the most out of the meeting and for the Member or his/her staffer to understand the personal cost in not moving these issues forward.

**12. How can I get additional help?**

Contact our No Excuses team by e-mail at [NoExcuses@hrc.org](mailto:NoExcuses@hrc.org) or by calling toll-free 1-800-970-7472.