

Meeting Your Member of Congress

ONE is a new effort by Americans to rally Americans – ONE by ONE – to fight the emergency of global AIDS and extreme poverty. Almost 2 million Americans have joined ONE: The Campaign to Make Poverty History. ONE aims to help Americans raise their voice as ONE, so that our leaders will do more to save millions of lives in the poorest countries.

In 2005, the ONE Campaign generated over 500,000 e-letters to President Bush before the G8 Summit in July. In response, President Bush and other world leaders promised \$25 billion more for Africa and \$50 billion more globally by 2010, as well as specific efforts on HIV/AIDS and education. In 2006, on the heels of these commitments, ONE supporters have taken action asking leaders to follow through on their promises.

For the first time, we have the ability to make poverty history. We have the resources and we know what works – education, health care, clean water. We simply need to decide to make it happen. This is where you come in!

Congress has the opportunity to create hope, opportunity and stability for people in the world's poorest countries and a better, safer world for us all. Your Members of Congress, the elected officials who represent YOU, will decide how much to spend on the fight against global AIDS and extreme poverty. They need to hear from you!

A personal meeting with your Member of Congress can be incredibly effective. While members and staff hear from constituents every day, an in-person meeting enables you to voice your concerns and state your interest in fighting global AIDS and extreme poverty. Furthermore, visiting a Member offers a unique opportunity to voice your opinions, ask questions and get immediate feedback.

Step-By-Step Instructions: Meeting with Your Member of Congress

Organizing a meeting takes leadership and perseverance, but the ONE team will help guide and support you and your local team through the process. Here are instructions to help you get started:

1. Who Are Your Elected Officials?

The first step is to figure out who represents you in the Senate and House of Representatives. You can do this by visiting either www.house.gov or www.senate.gov and entering your city, state or zip code. If you link to your elected official's website, you can also figure out where they have district offices and which location is most convenient for you. Their websites are also a great place to find out where they stand on various issues.

2. Contact Your Member(s) of Congress

To request a meeting with one or all of your elected officials, contact your Member of Congress via telephone. They may ask you to fax your meeting request and include

proposed dates, contact information and why you wish to meet. Avoid e-mail and letters unless specifically requested by the Member's Appointment Scheduler. Be sure to schedule your meeting as soon as you can by calling the Member's **local** office and speaking with their Scheduler. Their local office number is available on the member's website. When you make your appointment, state who will be attending (ONE Members) and the purpose of the visit (to show that there are constituents who care about what Congress is doing to reduce global poverty). Explain that you would like to arrange a meeting with the Member.

3. Schedule a Preparation Meeting

Before sitting down with your elected official(s), meet with your delegation and walk through all the points you want to make. ONE will be able to help you with this by providing talking points and a sample script. When your group meets, choose a spokesperson to lead the meeting. The meeting probably won't take very long, but it will give you a chance to meet the other ONE members you will be going with and be better prepared. The meeting should be at least one-day before the actual meeting with the Member.

During the preparatory meeting, go over the talking points and fact sheets as a group. Then decide which specific issues you would like to emphasize at your meeting and make sure everyone feels comfortable with the choices. Also use this time to address any questions individual members of your delegation may have about the topics and how you plan to present them to your Member of Congress.

It is the leader of your delegation's responsibility to coordinate the discussion and see that the meeting with your elected official is conducted in a professional and respectful manner. Copies of the enclosed guidelines to your delegation should be provided and reviewed together. A Member's time is precious, so being prepared and conducting yourself in a professional manner will ensure that you and your issues are taken seriously.

4. Attend Meeting

If you have taken all of the above steps, you and your delegation will be fully prepared to meet your elected official(s). This is your opportunity to let your representative know how important fighting extreme poverty and AIDS is to you and that you want him or her to keep the promises made last year at the G8.

5. Report back to ONE.org

After the meeting, go to ONE.org and let us know how it went!

Special note: If you are unable to get a meeting with your elected official(s) or their staff, ask the office for a schedule of the Member's upcoming **townhall meetings**. Townhall meetings are a chance for Members of Congress to host a forum, meet constituents and hear their concerns. There, you and your group can express your concerns about global AIDS and extreme poverty.

Lobbying Meeting Guidelines for All Participants

Present Yourself as a Constituent

Most important to your Member of Congress is that you are his or her constituent. We recommend presenting yourself as a constituent who cares about global poverty. Explain why it matters to you, the work you have done to fight poverty and AIDS and your active involvement in the ONE Campaign.

Dress Professionally

A professional appearance will convey respect for your Member of Congress and ensure that you are taken seriously.

Be on time

Though this is obvious, make sure everyone in the delegation knows where the meeting is, has directions and arrives on time. We recommend setting up a meeting place outside of the Member's office and going in together.

Follow the Leader

While everyone who wishes to speak should get an opportunity, it is your responsibility, as the leader, to facilitate and coordinate the discussion. This may require advance preparation at the initial group meeting.

Manage your time

Elected officials maintain very tight schedules. Be aware of how long your meeting is scheduled to last and manage the discussion so you can raise all of your key concerns and leave time for your questions to be answered. Focus on your main points first in case things have to be cut short.

Respect

Though we do not always agree with our elected officials on every issue, it is important to use this opportunity to focus on what your Member of Congress can be do to address global AIDS and extreme poverty in the future. In short, do not focus on where you may have disagreed in the past.

Be appreciative

Before leaving, don't forget to thank the Member of Congress for his or her time and willingness to have an open discussion with you. Leave a fact sheet with them so they can refer back to some of the key issue points later and encourage them to sign the candidate pledge. It is also nice to send a hand-written thank-you note so your Member knows how much you appreciated the meeting.

Talking Points

Provided here is a guide of talking points to help you be an effective lobbyist at your meeting. At your preparatory meeting, be sure to determine who will cover the important points...

Introductions

Who You Are: Explain to your Member of Congress why you care and are passionate about fighting global AIDS and extreme poverty. This is YOUR Member, so make it personal.

What is ONE: Explain that you are all members of the ONE Campaign – an effort by Americans to rally Americans- ONE by ONE - to fight the emergency of global AIDS and extreme poverty. Tell your Member that you believe a comprehensive package of debt cancellation, trade reform and an allocation of an additional 1% of the budget toward poverty-focused development assistance could build a better, more secure world for us all.

Showing Your Appreciation: Thank your Member for meeting and ask him or her to help make poverty history through both funding and U.S. policies.

Background on Development Assistance

Fact: ONE Billion people live on less than \$1 a day. International Assistance saves lives and empowers individuals to help themselves. Increasing international assistance by an amount equal to just ONE percent of the federal budget, or by an additional \$5 billion every year for the next 5 years, will help:

- Prevent 10 million children from becoming AIDS orphans
- Help get 104 million children into grade school
- Provide water to almost 900 million people around the globe
- Save almost 6.5 million children under 5 from preventable deaths

ASK: Tell your Member of Congress that you hope he or she will find ways to provide this needed, life-saving funding. Ask him or her to take every opportunity to cosponsor and vote for legislation that aims to increase federal funding for poverty-focused development assistance that directly impacts the world's poorest people.

Background on Trade

Fact: Whereas aid money is needed, fair trade is an essential element to helping others lift themselves out of poverty. Our aid helps address immediate needs, but global trade rules must be reformed to put the poorest people on the path to a sustained, self-sufficient life without poverty. Fair trade directly helps and empowers individuals to break the cycle of poverty.

Fact: Increased access to trade will allow people in the world's poorest countries to build up their economies, stand on their own two feet and provide education, healthcare and clean water for themselves and their families. But this will only happen if farmers, entrepreneurs and shopkeepers can sell their goods at a fair price.

Fact: If Africa could regain just an additional 1% share of global trade, it would earn them \$70 billion more each year - several times more than what the region currently receives in effective international assistance.

Ask: Ask your Member of Congress to please support limitations on trade-distorting subsidies on crops that developing countries produce, like cotton. These subsidies damage rural livelihoods and trap the people who grow such subsidized commodities in a life of poverty.

Background on Debt

Fact: In June 2005, world leaders agreed to write off \$40 billion of debt owed by 18 of the world's poorest countries and also promised to extend this debt cancellation to 20 more countries.

Fact: In the past year, proceeds from debt cancellation have put children in school in Burundi and eliminated health care fees in rural Zambia – but much remains to be done.

Ask: Ask your Member of Congress to extend the debt cancellation deal to all countries that need it most and suffer from a burden of immense debt that keeps them locked into a cycle of extreme poverty.

Following Up with your Member of Congress

Following your visit, it is not only important to report back to the ONE staff, but you should also follow up with your Member of Congress and his or her staff. A short thank-you note goes a long way and reinforces for your Member of Congress the importance of his/her work and indicates what it means to you as a constituent.

Sample Thank-You Note:

Dear (Congressperson/Senator):

Thank you for taking the time to meet with our group and discuss America's opportunity to do even more to lead the world in the fight against global AIDS and extreme poverty. This is a bipartisan effort and we appreciate your willingness to discuss what Americans are doing to make the world a better, safer place for us all.

By directing an additional 1% percent of the U.S. budget toward effective international assistance and fighting the corruption that wastes precious resources, we can help transform the futures and hopes of an entire generation in the world's poorest countries. Together as ONE, America could help prevent 10 million children from becoming AIDS orphans and enroll 104 million children in grade school.

We believe doing more to fight global AIDS and extreme poverty is in America's interests and it's the right thing to do. I hope that as you campaign and legislate in Congress, you will continue to support America's life-saving efforts to help save and change lives in Africa and the world's poorest countries.

Sincerely,

The ONE supporters of (YOUR TOWN/CITY/STATE)

Background Information on the U.S. Budget Process

Below is a brief overview to help familiarize your delegation with the U.S. budget process and the role of your Member of Congress.

The budget process initiates with the President's annual State of the Union address but formally begins on the first Monday of February with the submission of the President's budget. The President's budget is non binding; it is considered simply the administration's proposal and request. After the President's budget is submitted, the House and Senate Budget Committees begin developing their own versions of the budget called the budget resolution, which is a *concurrent resolution*, meaning it does not require the President's signature.

Fundamentally, the budget resolution sorts out Federal spending according to 20 budget functions, which are simply categories of spending ie, defense, health, agriculture. The function ONE cares about is Function 150 - International Affairs Budget.

The budget resolution sets the total spending ceiling for each House and Senate committee referred to as the 302 (a) allocations¹. After the Appropriations Committee receives their 302(a) allocation it then subdivides the total amount among its 12 subcommittees. This subdivision is referred to as the 302(b) allocations². The 302(b) allocation sets the overall spending level for the appropriations subcommittees.

Once a budget resolution has been passed and 302(b) allocations distributed, the appropriations process begins. The appropriations process involves passing and enacting 12 separate appropriations bills, one for each of the 12 subcommittees of the Appropriations Committee. ONE's primary focus is the Foreign Operations Bill because it houses the majority of the poverty-fighting assistance.

Appropriations bills must be signed by the President to become law. If all 12 appropriations bills are not enacted by October 1, the day the new fiscal year begins, Congress may pass a *continuing resolution* to fill the gap for whatever amount of time seems necessary and appropriate.

¹ The authority for these allocations is provided under Section 302(a) of the Budget Act. For that reason, these allocations often are referred to simply as "302(a)s."

² This second-level distribution is provided for under Section 302(b) of the Budget Act, so the sub-allocations often are called "302(b)s."