

Family TEAM: Building Relationships With Legislators



Why Build Relationships?

- Politics and Legislation are heavily influenced by **personal** relationships.
- We **listen** to those we **know** personally!
- Tip O'Neill: “**All politics is local.**”



Let's Cover Some Misunderstandings...

- Persuasion Does **Not** Mean Corruption.
- Legislators are **normal people**: they don't know everything, making relationships even more important!
- Legislators need additional **insight**, just like anyone else.



What Should I Know?

- **Get To Know Your Legislator!**
- Many Representatives have a **biography** on their site.
- **Do Your Homework.** Know who they are, what they've done, and where they stand!



Who Do I Talk To?

- Find Your Legislator! Using <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>
- You'll often reach **staffers** long before the Representative.
- Take the time to work with their **office**.
- Work with **local officials!**



Where Do I Begin?

- **Email** your Legislator!
- Contact the **office** of your legislator.
- **Introduce Yourself!** You have qualifications, let them know!
- Legislators know they always have a **broader audience**.



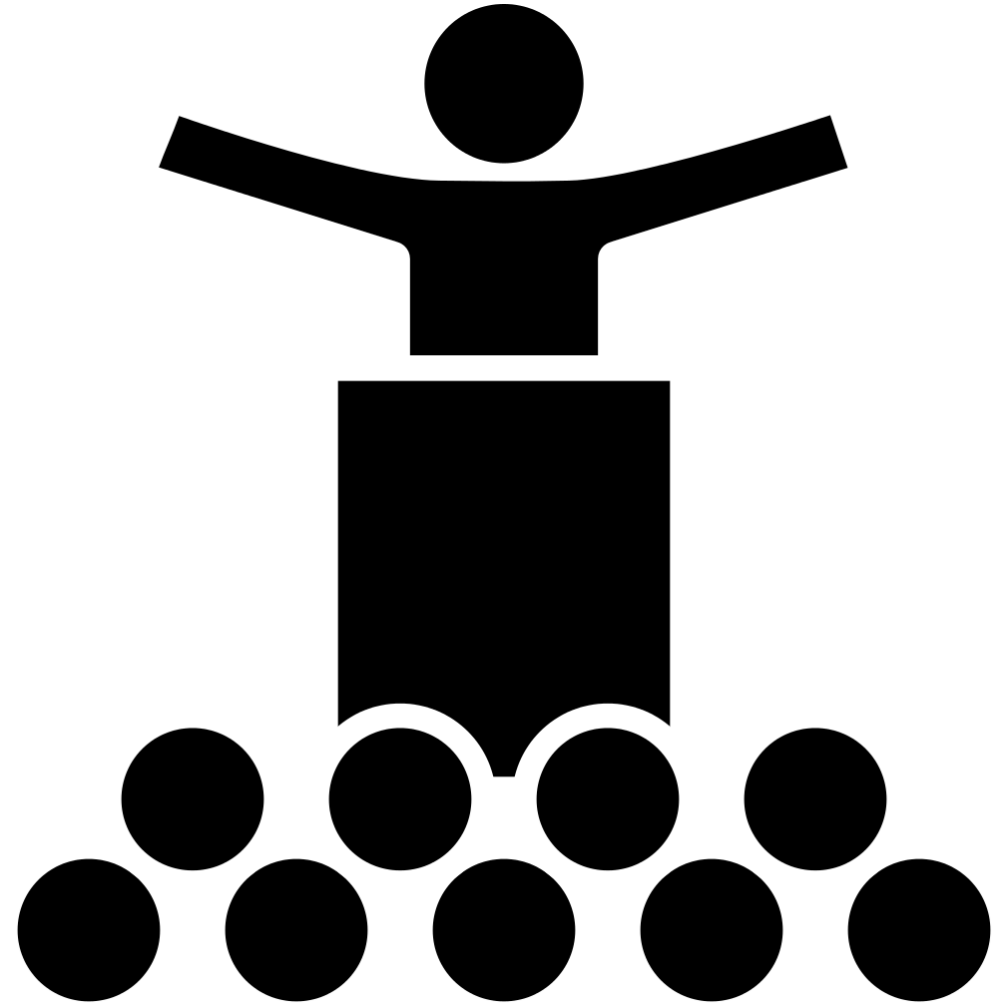
Making An Appointment

- If you're in their **district**, you can generally make an appointment.
- **Senate** members and staffers are **harder to reach**, takes more time.
- House members and staff usually try to **be available** for **constituents**.
- Remember: they want to **stay in office!**



Attending Community Meetings

- Find what **community events** your Representative is **attending**.
- **Research** the state/community events they are likely to attend.
- Community **Town Halls**, local meet-and-greets, openings, etc.
- Use this opportunity to **introduce** yourself, not to force an issue.



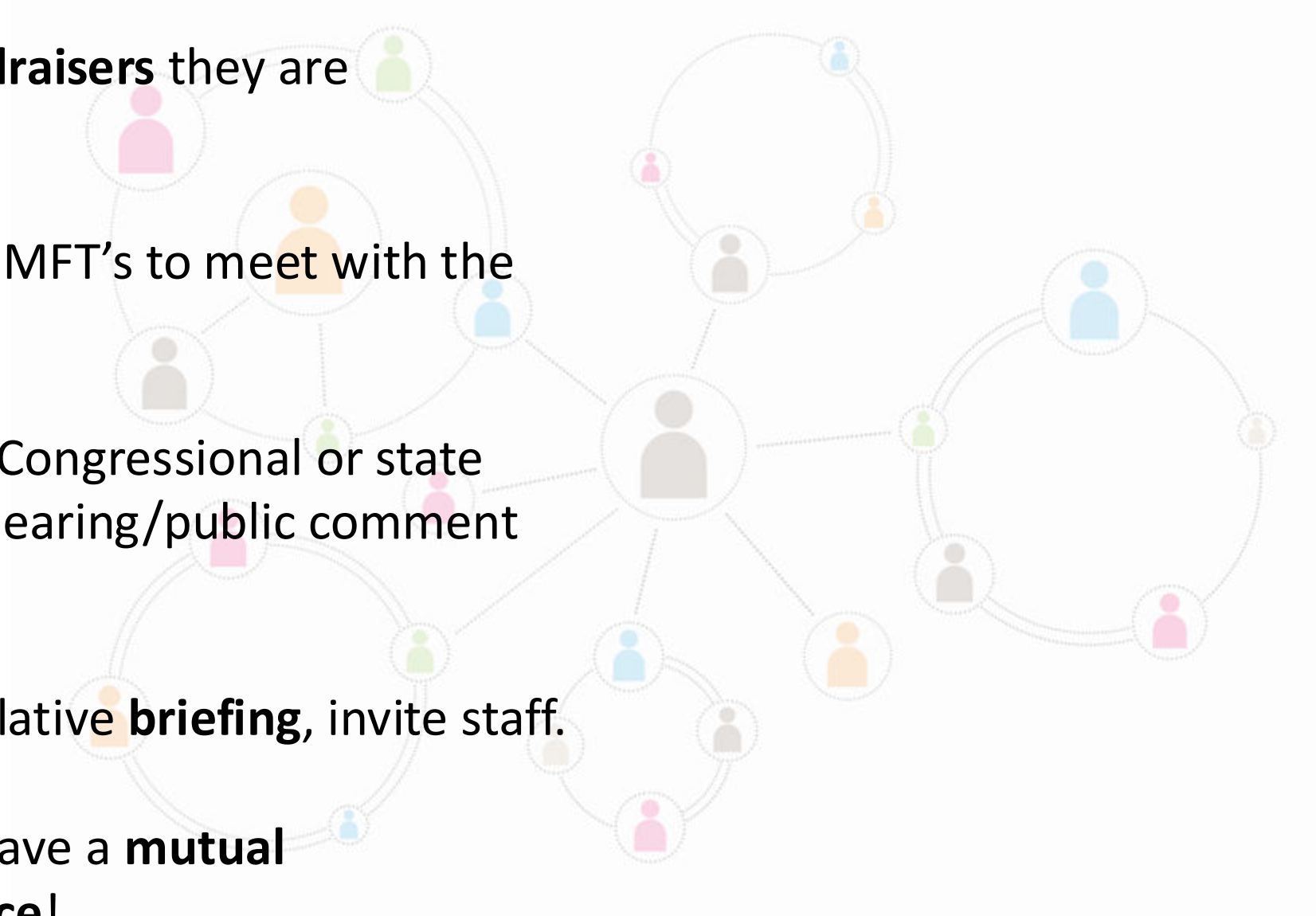
Inviting Representatives

- Invite your Representative to **meet your organization**.
- **A reason to attend:** let them speak, invite to contribute to an event, awards when appropriate.
- **A reason to come back:** give people a chance to share their story, a fact sheet, a thank-you-letter.
- Invite the **Media**: Coverage=Votes!



Other Ways to Introduce Yourself

- Attend **fundraisers** they are attending.
- Bring other MFT's to meet with the legislator.
- **Testify** at a Congressional or state legislative hearing/public comment session.
- Hold a legislative **briefing**, invite staff.
- See if you have a **mutual acquaintance!**



Maintaining the Relationship

- Always come prepared: **know your facts!**
- Be a **reliable** source of information: Be the person they can go to with questions.
- Be completely open and **honest** about the **effects** of policies you support.



Maintaining the Relationship

- Know and respect their **limitations.**
- Never be a nuisance! **Don't abuse the relationship!**
- **Keep in contact** after first meeting them. Thank them for their work and support.



Why Do We Care?

- Legislators are people too: they need **information**.
- There will always be more **issues** to tackle.
- Sharing information helps us understand what the **future** will bring us.
- Building a strong **foundation** today for **tomorrow's** benefit.

Questions?

Join here:

Email questions to FamilyTEAM@aamft.org



Resources

Here is a list of links to articles!

<https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/advocacy/direct-action/relationships-with-legislators-aides/main>

<https://www.actionutah.org/getting-to-know-your-representatives/>

<https://www.battlefields.org/preserve/speak-out/tips-communicating-legislators>

[https://cqrcengage.com/treatmentadvocacycenter/How to Meet Your Legislator](https://cqrcengage.com/treatmentadvocacycenter/How%20to%20Meet%20Your%20Legislator)

<https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/how-have-effective-visit-your-policy-maker>

<https://ldaamerica.org/legislation/legislative-resources/meeting-with-your-legislators-federal-state-or-local/>

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/meeting with your legislator](https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/meeting_with_your_legislator)

https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/sites/default/files/documents/07_personalvisits.pdf



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