

# Getting it Right:

A people's guide to renegotiating NAFTA



## Tips on lobbying your Member of Parliament

The Council of Canadians is a grassroots organization that encourages and inspires people to take action. Meeting with your Member of Parliament (MP) is a great way to help push for positive change on important public policy issues that affect us all.

Here are some tips that will help you make the most out a meeting with your MP:

- 1. Know your MP.** It's important to do a bit of research before you meet with your MP. You should know what party they are with and how they have voted on the issue you would like to speak to them about (or related issues). Visit their website and learn a bit about their background to find out if you have areas of common interest.
- 2. Set a meeting time.** MPs are very busy so it's a good idea to book your meeting time well in advance. You may need to work with the MP's scheduling assistant to find a time that will work for both of your schedules. When asking for a meeting, be sure to tell the MP's office why you want to meet. MPs are generally very open to meeting with constituents and community leaders.
- 3. Prepare for your meeting.** Do you have talking points? Review them several times until you are very comfortable and familiar with them. If you are going with other people, meet to discuss the topics you would like to cover so you can make the best use of time. Put together a package of materials to leave with the MP and be prepared to answer any questions they might have. If you don't know the answer to a particular question, say you will find it out and get back to them.
- 4. Be flexible.** Things can change very quickly for an MP – travel arrangements can change, unscheduled debates or votes may require them to travel to Ottawa, or there may be something happening in their constituency that they need to attend to. If your meeting gets rescheduled, don't give up. Make sure you follow up to reschedule. Sometimes instead of cancelling your meeting your MP may ask that you meet with one of their staff members instead. MP staff members have more time and may be able to help you move the issue forward with your MP, so take the opportunity to meet with them.
- 5. Always follow up.** It's always a good idea to follow up a meeting with a thank you note either by email or regular mail. A follow up letter or email can also be a way to remind the MP about what you discussed, or provide them with more information.

Let us know how your meeting went! We can keep track of what MPs had to say, which will help us build momentum and political pressure on important policy issues. Thank you for taking action!

Send us an email at [inquiries@canadians.org](mailto:inquiries@canadians.org), call us toll-free at 1-800-387-7177, or mail in a short description of your meeting to: Council of Canadians, Atten.: NAFTA campaign, 300-251 Bank St., Ottawa, ON, K2P 1X3.

For more information about our campaigns visit [canadians.org](http://canadians.org) or call us toll-free at 1-800-387-7177.