

## Meet & Greet with your Legislator – SAMPLE AGENDA

**1) Introduce your group to your legislator and highlight its activities.** *“We are a group that believes that a functional democracy requires an informed and engaged voting public – therefore we take current day issues and deconstruct them for community dialogue. This past year we did voter education work and initiated a campaign to...”*

**2) Let your legislator know what you want them to do in Salem.** *“As our representative in Salem, we want to talk to you about the issues this group sees as priorities.”* These might include maintaining democratic commitment to a safety net during this public health and financial crisis, or ensuring the inclusion of immigrants and farm workers, or whatever is most relevant to your community. Do focus on issues that will be decided at that level of government (ie. while there may be small ways our State legislators could be influential on US foreign policy, they will be more directly involved in efforts to expand addiction treatment services across Oregon and ensure timber companies logging in our state are paying their fair share in taxes.)

**3) Propose a plan for maintaining contact** as your legislator navigates decision-making in Salem. *“Cecilia Jones is our lead contact and she will be checking in with you as the session progresses.”* Mention that you look forward to meeting with them again and will be contacting them to set up a specific time.

**4) Say thanks** and remember to send a follow-up thank you letter or email reminding your legislator about your conversation.

### Tips for Talking with your Legislator

- ◆ **Develop Relationships** - Strive for a good working relationship. Such relationships must be both built and maintained; they must be honest and straightforward; and they must be premised on mutual respect. Try to avoid only talking to your legislator when you need something, but if you do need something do not hesitate to ask.
- ◆ **Remember, Your Vote is Important (and all the votes your group gets out!)** - Never forget that as a voter, your vote is important to your legislator. As a member of a local human dignity group and the Rural Organizing Project, legislators will want your vote and the support of your group, so they will look for ways to work with you if possible.
- ◆ **Use your personal story** - Phrase the argument in your own words. You don't have to be the most articulate person in the world to do this – just be yourself and tell your own story about why these issues are important to you and your group. No one can be expected to address every question or matter of concern regarding an issue, so don't hesitate to admit your lack of knowledge on a particular point. But be willing to pursue the answer and report back.
- ◆ **Be firm but courteous as you express your opinion** - Do not get in angry debates with legislators but do ask them where they stand on issues. If need be, say, “I am unclear as to your position. Do you support or oppose...?”
- ◆ **Follow up** Follow up with a note thanking the legislator for their time. Use the note as an opportunity to briefly restate your positions and values. When you see them again later, remind them of who you are, who your group is, and that you've met before.