

Encounter for Our Common Home Legislative Encounter Template

Role	Assigned To
Facilitator: opens and closes the meeting and offers facilitation throughout	
Discussion Coordinator 1: introduces concerns of the group and illustrates with story/ies	
Discussion Coordinator 2: elaborates concerns of the group with story/ies	
“Asker”: makes the specific policy ask of the member of Congress	
Note-taker: records notes throughout, noting any follow-up steps that arise	
Photo-taker: takes a photo (or screenshot) of delegation with member of Congress	
Follow-up email: follows up with the legislator or staffer by email	

Before the Visit

- Assign roles
- Conduct background research on the members of Congress—and on any staffers who will be present, time allowing. What is their track record on climate? Where did they stand on the Build Back Better bill last fall before it was derailed? What are their priority issues? Are they Catholic or otherwise people of faith? A quick Google search can yield a lot of this information. You can also use any idle time before the visit starts (for example, if a staffer arrives a few minutes early) to learn about their work area and current priorities.
- Plan out and practice the visit

During the Visit

(30-minute meeting)

Throughout the visit the **note-taker** should be taking notes, paying particular attention to any commitments the legislator makes, any follow-up steps that arise, and any information that may be helpful to ongoing engagement with the legislator around this issue.

At some point during the visit—typically at the end—the photo-taker should request a photo with the legislator. If on Zoom, they should request a screenshot.

1. **Introductions (Facilitator)** – 5 minutes

Thank the Senator / staffer. Introduce yourself and your group, and explain that you are in Washington, D.C., this week to meet with legislators to express your concerns about climate change as a part of a larger campaign of hundreds of members of the U.S. Catholic community, Encounter for Our Common Home. For small groups, invite everyone to introduce themselves: names, city, major (students) and role on campus (staff). Ask the Senator / staffer to introduce himself/herself.

2. **Story & Issues (DISCUSSION COORDINATOR 1)** – 3 minutes

If you haven't already, introduce yourself and explain why you are concerned about climate change. Share general concerns of the group and/or share your own story or particular concern about the climate crisis

3. **Story & Issues (DISCUSSION COORDINATOR 2)** – 3 minutes

If you haven't already, introduce yourself and share another story or particular concern about the climate crisis.

4. **Ask (ASKER)** – 5 minutes

"We are in Washington, D.C, to press for legislation that provides \$555 billion in climate investments and programs. These include clean energy tax credits, investing in making agriculture and forest conservation a part of climate solutions, assisting communities with becoming more resilient to extreme weather and other climate-related events, and reducing pollution in communities over-burdened by the public health harms of fossil fuel and other industries. We also support measures that would assist communities heavily dependent on fossil fuel industries with making the transition to a clean energy economy.

"These provisions are perhaps a once-in-a-generation opportunity to significantly reduce national greenhouse gas emissions."

If meeting with a Democratic senator: "We know that you are in support of these climate solutions. What are you doing to make sure that this passes in Congress?"

If meeting with a Republican senator: "What climate measures are you willing to support?"

If meeting with a Democratic representative: "We know that the House of Representatives has passed these climate measures in the Build Back Better Act. What are you doing to demand

that our senators pass these climate investments? What other climate measures are you supporting in this Congress?"

Give space for the staff member to answer your questions.

5. Discussion (FACILITATOR)

Open the floor for continued conversation from members of the group. Let the conversation flow naturally from how the staff member answers your above questions. Anyone in the group can jump in with follow-up questions or expressions of concern or interest.

Some questions to consider if there is a lag in the conversation:

- What are the Senator's/Representative's specific priorities related to climate legislation? How can we support their efforts on these priorities?
- How does the Senator/Representative work with legislators of the other party to address climate change? What approaches have been most fruitful?
- What legislation do you think is likely to pass in this Congress? What messaging would be helpful in encouraging more legislators to take action on climate change?
- Can you tell us about other climate legislation that you are working on?

6. Closing (FACILITATOR)

Thank the legislator or staff member for her/his time and suggest that you will keep in touch to share your views on legislation as it is introduced, and to learn more about what the legislator is doing about climate change. **If a group photo has not been taken, ask the legislator and/or staff member at this point for a photo with the group.**

After the Visit

- Take a few minutes to debrief as a group. How did the visit go? What kind of response did you get from the legislator or staff member? What did you learn that might be helpful for ongoing engagement around this issue with this legislator? Are there any follow-up steps that you need to take, for example, sending information the legislator/staff member requested?
- Have one member of the group follow-up with the legislator and/or staffer by email, summarizing the ask of the visit and including any additional follow-up information that was requested (for example, if the group gets a question you don't know how to answer, you can offer to follow up with information by email).