

Working with Your State Legislators

Get to know the state legislators in your district, and work to build a relationship with them. Legislators are normal people. Elected officials, and all of their staff, are more accessible than you may realize. Engaged, articulate constituents can have a huge impact.

You can find your state legislators at:

<https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/cgafindleg.asp>

- Learn about your lawmakers.
 - Visit their official and campaign websites to learn more about their background and the issues they care about. This will also help you recognize them in person, and may help you find common ground you have — such as an alma mater or a profession.
 - Follow them on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media.
- Schedule a meeting in their district office.
- Sign up for their email lists, like them on Facebook, and follow them on Twitter. Be engaged in a positive way — “like” the posts you agree with.
- Attend town hall meetings, coffee hours, and other public events where you can politely ask about regulating marijuana for adults’ legal use.
- [Call their office](#) and speak to your lawmaker or a staff member.
- [Send an email](#) or write a letter.

Meeting with Legislators

- Make an appointment!
- Familiarize yourself with the issue, including by checking out our webinar and the [Fact Center](#) on our website.
- Research how the legislator has voted on related issues like decriminalization in the [House](#) and [Senate](#).
- **Dress for success! Business attire signals you are there to discuss a serious issue. If you’ll be doing a lot of walking, make sure to wear comfortable, professional shoes.** Do not wear anything with marijuana imagery, and do not smell of marijuana during your visit.
- If you have them, bring plenty of business cards to leave behind. If you don’t have any, make sure to leave your contact information.
- If you are advocating on behalf of a loved one, bring that person along, if possible. If not, bring a photo so your lawmakers have a face to go with the story. If applicable, be prepared to discuss how you or a loved one has been affected by prohibition.
- Provide a copy of “The Benefits of Taxing and Regulating Marijuana”.
- Make a **brief** presentation on why you support this legislation.

- Start with “Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today.”
 - If you are part of a group, meet up beforehand (or talk by phone) to decide what order you will speak in, and who will cover which issues.
 - Be respectful of the lawmaker (or staffer’s) time.
 - Limit the presentation to between three and five key points.
 - Personal stories are effective, but be conscious of time. Practice telling your story in advance (if applicable), and keep to the most important points.
 - If possible, work from notes and not a scripted speech.
 - End the presentation with a request (i.e., Will you support marijuana regulation as part of a responsible budget solution?).
- Offer to answer any questions. If you do not know the answer, do not make it up. Tell them you will get back to them with that information. Let us know if you need any help replying by emailing Sam@RegulateCT.org.
 - Take notes, including on the legislators’ responses.
 - **Always be respectful, even if their comments are upsetting.** Education and compassion will change a vote, not aggressive or offensive behavior.
 - Thank them again for their time, and leave your contact information.

After your meeting

- Make sure to follow up within two days, either with a friendly letter or by email.
 - Thank them for taking the time to speak with you.
 - Address any of their concerns and provide any information that was requested.
 - Review [sample thank you letters](#).
- Contact Sam Tracy, director of Regulate CT, at Sam@RegulateCT.org to report on your meeting. Or, fill out a lobby report form [here](#).

Thank you for speaking out in support of sensible marijuana policies in Connecticut.

Good luck!