

Crafting a One-Minute Pitch for Policymakers

How you “pitch,” or introduce, yourself to policymakers or their staffs can pique their interest in you as a constituent and help set the stage for an effective conversation. Whether you are calling, meeting face to face, or bumping into a staff member at a public meeting, being prepared with a solid introduction that lasts no more than a minute can make all the difference in their receptiveness to what you have to say.

The Basic Elements

- Name, town, and years you’ve lived in the district
- Occupation/what you do
- What networks or communities you represent
- What you are asking them to act on (be specific and concrete—e.g., vote yes or no on a bill, cosponsor a bill, join a certain caucus)
- Why you care, and why you and your community want them to take action (an anecdote can be helpful)

A sample script:

“Hi, I’m [full name, with prefix if applicable]. I’ve lived in [town] for [#] years. I am a [profession] working on [issue]. I graduated from/work at [university/organization connection]. I’m here today to discuss [issue] because [why you care]. I also represent [#] people from my [department/group/neighborhood/place of worship] who vote in your district and are concerned about this

issue. [Offer a concise fact about how it affects the community, and the action that’s needed].”

Tips to Strengthen Your Pitch

Now that you have a formula, here are some things to consider as you craft your pitch:

Establish that you are a scientist or technical expert; worry less about your field of expertise. If your expertise is relevant, don’t be shy to share it in layman’s terms. Even if it isn’t directly related, you can still speak as an informed constituent. Policy-makers often care more that you have *any* science background or affiliation than about your specific area of expertise.

Emphasize your assets as a scientist who is also a constituent, not just your specialty. A legislator’s staff members are not necessarily experts in a given policy, nor are they looking for that in a high-value constituent. Your broader knowledge is almost always more than enough to establish yourself as a voice that should be heard. Furthermore, your connections, relationship with the community, skill sets, and access to technical information will also be seen as assets to a policymaker’s staff.

Share your story—and your connections. Say how long you’ve been or plan to be a voter in the district. Describe your affiliations with local organizations, including academic institutions, faith groups, small-business coalitions, neighborhoods, or any other communities that the policymaker cares about. This will help



UCS staff and members of our Science Network meet with Maine Senator Susan Collins (third from left) during a legislative action event in Washington, DC. A solid, compelling introduction that lasts no more than a minute can make all the difference in a policymaker’s receptiveness to what you have to say.

