



# TOWN HALL MEETING TIPS

Less than 1% of Americans ever talk to their elected officials. That gives a lot of power to the 1% that do! Iowa lawmakers hold public meetings throughout the state to hear concerns from the people they represent. They are great places to make your voice heard!

Public meetings are called a lot of things - legislative coffees, town hall meetings, public forums, even “Eggs & Issues” and “Pizza & Politics.” But they are all the same thing – a great way to take action on the issues YOU care about (and get the attention of your elected officials).

- Check the INFONET website for scheduled forums (updated frequently) – [www.infonetiowa.org](http://www.infonetiowa.org).
  - Check ahead if possible to make sure no changes have been made to the event. Iowa winters can mean snow and ice – and cancelled events. Legislators sometimes are required to be at the Capitol without much notice, causing cancellations. Always best to call ahead.
  - Take along talking points on your issue or use our message worksheet to help with what you want to say. Go over them ahead of time in order to be clear about your thoughts on the issue.
  - Clearly identify yourself and the issue you want to address. Clearly state your position (support, oppose, what you want them to do).
  - Get right to the point. There will be others there who think their issue is just as, or more important, than the issue you want to discuss.
  - Don’t burn bridges. Hold your tongue if you think you will say something that is out of line. Even though they may not support you on this issue, they may be your biggest supporter on the next.
  - Be sure to sign in, because legislators often use these lists to inform constituents about upcoming events or as sign up for newsletters.
  - At the end of your comments, thank them for their time. (Legislators work all week in Des Moines away from their families and their “real” jobs. Taking this time on weekends is an important part of their service.)
  - You don’t have to speak at these forums. Just showing up will have an impact! But do introduce yourself to your lawmakers either before or after the forum – at least use this time to let them know who you are, even if you’re not asking for something!
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- By taking the time to attend a local forum, you’ll have:**
- Met the people you elected to represent you.
  - Clearly stated your position on an issue.
  - Asked for their help on your issue.
  - Established/strengthened your relationship with them.
  - Signed up for future communications.
  - Became a resource or someone they can turn to again when they are dealing with your issue in the future.
  - Walked away with the knowledge that your opinion matters and that you have done your civic duty by participating in our representative government and impacting public policy decisions.