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click on any of  
these questions to  
read the answer

## the basics

### what is parliamentary advocacy?

Our mission is to “generate the political will to end extreme poverty”. Parliamentary engagement is conducting actions to influence decision-makers. Change can happen when everyday people raise their voices for a better world for all.

### who are “parliamentarians”?

Parliamentarians are Members of Parliament and senators. Both represent you in Government. Ministers are also parliamentarians; they are appointed MPs from the party in power, representing a particular file.

### how does Results determine the best strategy to engage with parliamentarians?

Timing is of the essence when it comes to advocacy. An MP or senator represents your voice in the legislative branch. They vocalize their constituents’ values and concerns, therefore, building long-term relations with your MP and senator(s) is very important. Ministers can also be directly solicited at times as they could be the key decision-makers on specific issues. It is ultimately about momentum within the government of the day and how our priorities fit into that.

### what does it mean to build a meaningful relationship with your MP?

Building that relationship takes time. You should have semi-regular ‘soft’ touchpoints with your MP, such as sending a holiday card, attending their community event, and mentioning them on social media. ‘Hard’ touchpoints include sending emails, phone calls or meetings with your MP where you ask them to take action. You should be mindful about not flooding your MP with requests. Results is careful not to activate volunteers to engage with their MPs on each monthly [call-to-action](#), and we only ask you to request meetings when we have a very important and strategic ask for you to communicate.

## should I reach out?

### can I engage with a parliamentarian if I am not of voting age or not a Canadian citizen?

Yes. Regardless of your age, your background, or your status of residence in Canada, your voice matters! Emphasize to your MP that you care about ending extreme poverty in the world because your generation is committed to building a better future for all.

### can I reach out to my member of provincial parliament (MPP) or my member of the legislative assembly (MLA)?

As international development and foreign affairs fall within the federal government's jurisdiction, Results focuses its advocacy on federal MPs. However, you can engage with your MLA or MPP to discuss international issues if you have already developed a positive relationship with them that you want to further. We encourage you to reach out to [action@resultscanada.ca](mailto:action@resultscanada.ca) to discuss strategic engagement opportunities with your MPP or MLA.

### why does Results engage only with parliamentarians at the federal level?

The federal government is the only entity authorized to commit funding in the realms of international development and humanitarian assistance. Results volunteers engage with parliamentarians at the federal level to hold decision-makers accountable and to educate them about important issues regarding global poverty.

### Is it useful to reach out to senators?

Not at this time. Results volunteers focus most of their efforts on MPs, however, senators are often invited to Results Canada's events or campaigns when appropriate. Reach out to us at [action@resultscanada.ca](mailto:action@resultscanada.ca) if you're interested in engaging with senators.

## writing to parliamentarians

### what are best practices for emailing parliamentarians?

If Results Canada has actioned you to write to your MP, MPs prefer emails formulated in your own words. Make it clear you are not sending a template email very early on; it's as simple as introducing yourself with a few details. Also include your address below your signature to confirm you live in their riding. If you feel comfortable, leave your phone number in case they want to call you back. Otherwise, keep your tone casual, be brief, and re-read your email for clarity a few times. Use their title if they have one ([find out here](#)).

Tip: Remind them you are a voter in their area early on in your email to catch their attention.

### how long should I wait before following-up with my MP?

Depending on variable circumstances, we typically encourage volunteers to follow-up with their MP 2 weeks after their first outreach attempt.

### what can I do if my MP does not message me back?

Don't take it personally and don't get discouraged! You may have to try to build that relationship several times. If your MP tells you international development is not a priority or area of interest for them, please reach out to us at [action@resultscanada.ca](mailto:action@resultscanada.ca) for strategic next steps.

## meeting parliamentarians

### when should I ask for a meeting with my MP?

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and shifting public health guidelines, meeting in-person with constituents is difficult. MPs have been dealing with increasing constituents' demands online and, like any other individual, MPs can experience Zoom fatigue. Requesting virtual meetings with your MP should be done sparingly and only when strategic. Take a look at our [call-to-action](#) webpage to learn about our recommended actions each month.

### how do I plan my meeting?

Study the person you are meeting on the [House of Commons website](#), on [Open Parliament](#) and on their social media. When were they elected? Have they spoken about this issue in the past?

What's their education? What committees are they in? Prepare a rough outline of your message using our [EPIC method](#), and study how to [engage with your MP](#). If you are meeting as a group, plan your meeting in detail to determine who will speak on what topic and when (you can download our [meeting planner](#)).

### how do I make a good impression?

(1) Show that you know who they are. For example, you can mention their committee work or their education. (2) Don't assume the individual you're speaking to completely agrees with their party's stance on the issue you're discussing. There are champions for our issues in all parties.

### what should I do if they don't agree with me?

Make your point in a succinct and powerful way. Then, ask a few clarifying questions about their position so you can engage in a productive discussion despite your differences. Even if parliamentarians are hesitant to support the issue, this information is useful for Results Canada's parliamentary strategy moving forward.

### what should I do if my MP asks for more evidence about a specific ask?

Assure your MP that any concerns or questions they have will be followed up on. We encourage you to email us at [action@resultscanada.ca](mailto:action@resultscanada.ca)! We will redirect you to our team of policy experts to answer your questions and provide more evidence-based solutions to a specific issue. Once you've received clarification, make sure you share this with the MP as a follow-up.

### how can I share what I learned during my meeting with Results?

[Report your action](#) to our team. This feedback is valuable information that helps us strategize for future parliamentary engagement.

## understanding parliamentary proceedings

### where can I learn more about how parliament works?

You can consult these [learning resources](#) from the Library of Parliament. If you're struggling with the terms used in parliament, consult our [parliamentary cheat sheet](#). You can also watch any of our past [webinars on parliamentary engagement](#).

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