

Tips on Conducting an Editorial Board Meeting

One of the most powerful ways to influence decision makers and to gain the public's support on an issue is to win the editorial support of your local newspaper. Editorial Board meetings provide you with an opportunity to do just that. During these meetings, you'll have a chance to persuade your newspaper editor about the importance of your issue and why the newspaper's readers would be interested in your story. This can increase the likelihood of more coverage by the newspaper of your issue. Here are some tips on arranging a meeting:

DETERMINE YOUR ANGLE

Before you make the first call, decide how you will approach the issue. What will your angle be? While Israel and Palestine is a global issue, it's important to turn it into a local issue so have your pitch ready to go and have some data on hand in case the editor requests them.

How does it connect to US aid or the Presbyterian vote? What is your Congressperson's record? What is a local BDS campaign that has gotten attention? Do they have a documentable record of poor reporting? Do they only have quotes from the local Jewish Federation, and not convey perspectives of Jews who oppose occupation?

CALL THE EDITORIAL PAGE EDITOR OR START WITH A REPORTER YOU KNOW TO HELP YOU GET IN

Briefly explain the issue and request a meeting. It can be stronger if you go in with partners—no more than 4 or 5 max, each prepared to speak very briefly. Palestinian, interfaith, student, Jewish religious partners, an academic-- can all be examples of strong representatives you want to go in with.

PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

Study the issue, write down key facts and list your main points. Think through the local angle. Why should your community or the newspaper's readers, and the editor, care about this issue? It's helpful to familiarize

yourself with the kinds of editorials and columns that appear in the paper. This will give you insight into the paper's position on certain issues. Prepare handouts, such as fact sheets, maps and recent data.

PRESENT YOUR ISSUE

The meeting will depend on the size of your newspaper's staff. You might meet with one editor, or several editorial writers and reporters. You will have about five to 10 minutes to state your case as persuasively as possible, after which you will be asked questions. If you do not know the answers, offer to find out and get back to the editor later.

LEAVE BEHIND HANDOUTS

Leave behind some printed material reinforcing the points you have made.

FOLLOW UP

After the meeting, send a note of thanks to the editor. If an editorial has not been published within a few days after your meeting, make a follow-up phone call to the editor. If the editor has decided to write on your issue, ask if the paper would print an op-ed or at least a letter to the editor submitted by you. Remember, that even if nothing gets printed, at least you have established yourself and your coalition as a source of information on Israel and Palestine in your community. (Adapted from APHA guide to editorial meetings)