

WORKERS' COMP IS A RIGHT

2018 Campaign Lobby Kit



Make Your Voice Heard!
Lobby Your MPP and/or City Councillor

Why lobby?

Lobbying can involve writing letters, having meetings, or otherwise talking to politicians about issues and problems that they need to be aware of and help fix – like the problems with the WSIB. It is one way of making sure your voice is heard.

It is important to lobby our elected representatives, and to call on them to help make systemic changes that will support injured workers.

Who to lobby?

As much as possible, we want to try and target both Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) and city councillors in our lobbying efforts. MPPs are the ones who can hold the WSIB accountable in the most direct way, because they write and vote on the laws that govern the WSIB. No matter the party that an MPP belongs to, it is worth meeting with them and presenting our demands to them.

City councillors are also good people to lobby, because they are affected by what's happening at the WSIB. When injured workers get cut off of WSIB benefits, many of them are forced to turn to social assistance programs like Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). These programs are administered by municipalities. So when injured workers have to rely on OW and ODSP, it means the costs of their work injuries are downloaded onto the municipally administered systems. Most city councillors are likely not aware of this, and once they find out, they likely won't be happy about having to pick up the tab for the WSIB's cuts.

Using this lobby kit

In this lobby kit, you will find some tips for approaching and setting up a meeting with your MPP and/or city councillor. Also included are some sample talking points about our three demands for change. And there are also some resources and materials that might be useful both for yourself in preparing for a meeting, and also to leave with the MPP and/or city councillor after you meet with them.

For more information

If you need any support or any more information, please feel free to contact Willy Noiles (noiles.will29@gmail.com), Karl Crevar (19karlcrevar@gmail.com), or Aidan Macdonald (macdonald@lao.on.ca or 416-461-2411).

Tips & Suggestions for Approaching your MPP or City Councillor

If you've never done it before, setting up a meeting with your MPP might seem like a daunting task. Once you've done it once or twice, though, you'll probably find that while it might take some persistence, it's not so intimidating. Remember, your MPP is supposed to be representing you. They work for you, and they need to be listening to your concerns.

If you know your MPP but need their contact information, you can find it here:

http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/members/member_addresses.do?locale=en

The same thing is true of your city councillor. So whether you're trying to meet with your MPP or your city councillor, you can follow the same approach and process.

Step 1: Call your MPP's office

Once you have your MPP's contact information, call their constituency office to set up a meeting. You may not reach a live person when you first call. If not, leave a message with your contact details and noting that the subject of your call is problems with the WSIB:

"Hi, my name is [your name] and I live in [name of riding]. I am a constituent, and I am also an injured worker. I'm having major problems with the WSIB and I know lots of other people are too.

I'd like to make an appointment with [name of MPP] to talk about a campaign I'm involved in to help fix the problems and bring fairness to the system.

Please let me know when [MPP] would be able to meet. You can call me back at [phone number].

Thank you."

If you want to meet with an MPP in whose riding you do not live, ask a constituent who does live in that riding to make the request and to accompany you to the meeting with their MPP.

Step 2: Follow up on your original phone call

If you do not get a call back within a couple of days, call again, stating that you called earlier.

The staff in some MPP's constituency offices may be reluctant to book an in-person meeting for you. It may be necessary to be persistent, repeating that you are a constituent. You may need to state that you are aware that MPPs have "Constituency Fridays," which are intended to be times that they are in their constituency offices & available to constituents. Remind them that the issues you want to talk about affect thousands of injured workers across the province.

Step 3: Meet your MPP

If you'd like someone to come with you to the meeting, don't hesitate to contact Willy Noiles (noiles.will29@gmail.com), Karl Crevar (19karlcrevar@gmail.com), or Aidan Macdonald (macdonald@lao.on.ca). They can help find someone for you.

Many MPPs know very little about the WSIB or how it treats injured workers. The best way to help them understand is to use your personal story. Tell them how you were treated by the system. This will work better than talking about policies and technicalities.

We want the meeting to be focused on our three demands:

- **No cuts based on phantom jobs!**
- **Stop cutting benefits based on “pre-existing conditions”!**
- **Listen to injured workers’ treating healthcare professionals**

So if you can relate your story to any of these demands (how the WSIB “deemed” you to have a job that you don't actually have, blamed your injuries on a “pre-existing condition,” and/or ignored your doctor), then that would be ideal.

Give them the original copies of the petition signatures. Ask the MPP to read the signatures out in the Legislature. **Don't leave the meeting before making a clear ask from the MPP!** Some sample asks are in the talking points below.

It's also a good idea to leave them with some documents to read after your meeting. You can leave copies of:

- Fact sheets on the three demands (attached below)
- The full Workers' Comp is a Right campaign report (<http://injuredworkersonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/WCIAR-Report-2017.pdf>)

You may not have time to talk about all three issues. If that's the case, just focus on one issue. It's better for them to leave the meeting with a full understanding of one issue, rather than having an unclear understanding of three issues.

We have also included some talking points on each of the three demands, which you can use in your meeting. You may want to take in some supporting documents, perhaps with some sections highlighted, for your own reference during the meeting.

Step 4: Let us know how it went

Send a quick report from the meeting to Willy, Karl, and Aidan, so we have a sense of how MPPs are responding.

**Workers' Comp is a Right –
Talking Points for MPP or City Councillor Meetings**

Opening

- Thank you for taking the time to meet with me. My name is XX and I am an injured worker. I'm part of the XX Injured Worker Group, which is part of the Ontario Network of Injured Workers' Groups.
- I want to talk to you today about a campaign that we have launched across the province, called the Workers' Comp is a Right campaign.
- We launched this campaign because injured workers in Ontario are in a state of crisis. The WSIB is trying to cut its own costs on the backs of injured workers. From 2009 to 2015, they cut \$1.16 billion from injured worker benefits. Close to 50% of injured workers with a permanent disability are living at or near the poverty line.
- The Workers' Comp is a Right campaign is calling for a strong, public compensation system that treats injured workers with dignity and respect, and gives them the support they need to get back on their feet.
- **For any MPP:** The issues I want to talk about are important for you to be aware of as an MPP, for many reasons. But one big reason is that when the WSIB cuts injured workers off benefits, they get forced onto social assistance programs like OW and ODSP. So the costs of work injuries end up getting downloaded onto taxpayer funded public systems.
- **For PC MPPs:** Your Party got elected based on promises that they will stand up for the "little guy." Well, injured workers are the little guy. We're up against a big, top-heavy bureaucracy that treats us like numbers instead of people, and forces us into poverty. And when injured workers get cut off of WSIB, we get forced onto social assistance programs like OW and ODSP. So the costs of work injuries get downloaded onto taxpayer funded public systems.
- **For NDP MPPs:** The NDP was very supportive of injured worker issues in the previous government, so thank you. Now that you have more power as the official opposition, we're asking the Party to put even more pressure on the government in concrete ways.
- **For city councillors:** The problems in the compensation system have an impact on this city council, because when the WSIB cuts injured workers off benefits, they get forced onto social assistance programs like OW and ODSP. So the costs of work injuries end up getting downloaded onto municipalities.

Deeming

- The first issue I want to discuss is the WSIB's practice of "deeming" (also called "determining)." Deeming is essentially when the the WSIB pretends an injured worker has a job that they do not in fact have in reality. It then pretends that the worker is earning a salary from the non-existent job, and uses the invented salary as a justification to cut their benefits. If a worker is unemployed, the WSIB will still pretend they are working and earning money, and cut their benefits accordingly.
- **Insert your own story about deeming, if you have one. If not, you can use the example below:**
- For example, Jennifer is making \$20/hour when she suffers a permanent back injury and cannot go back to her old job. She receives benefits from the WSIB for a few weeks. The WSIB then "deems" Jennifer able to work as a customer service representative – even though she has limited English skills, has no related work experience, and her doctor says she is not medically able to return to work. The WSIB deems Jennifer to be earning the current minimum wage of \$11.40/hour as a customer service representative, even though she has not been able to get a job and the WSIB knows she is not actually employed. Her benefits are cut by \$11.40/hour, and she now only gets about \$218 per week in workers' compensation benefits.
- Every year thousands of people who have a permanent disability as a result of their work injury are "deemed" to have a phantom job. It is one of the WSIB's favourite ways of cutting people off benefits.
- When the WSIB pretends people are employed even though the reality is that they are not, it systematically leads to poverty, and creates whole new sets of physical and mental health issues, and affects family and community well-being.
- The problem with deeming will actually get worse when the minimum wage goes up. I fully support raising the minimum wage. But unless the government steps in, the WSIB will use the higher minimum wage to pretend people are earning higher phantom wages. It will then cut injured worker benefits even more. There's more info about this in the fact sheet I brought. So we need the government to prevent the WSIB from using the higher minimum wage – something that's supposed to help low-income people – as a way to cut injured workers even more.
- We need the WSIB to stop cutting benefits based on phantom jobs. Instead, benefits should be based on actual earnings.

Listen to our doctors

- Another huge issue for injured workers across the province is that the WSIB is ignoring medical evidence and opinions from our treating healthcare professionals.
- All too often, if one of our treating doctors – the doctors who know us the best – says that we need a certain kind of treatment or medication, or that we’re not yet medically fit to go back to work, the WSIB just disregards it and denies us treatment or forces us back to work anyways.
- There are lots of different ways this happens. Sometimes the WSIB sends our file to a “medical consultant” – we call them “paper doctors” – who just reads our file and makes a determination without ever actually meeting us. Sometimes a case manager without any medical background just decides on their own to overrule our doctors.
- Sometimes they send us to their own physiotherapists or other health professionals who are paid more money if they say we’re ready to go to work, and less money if they say we need time off and more treatment.
- Again, this is a way of saving themselves money by avoiding paying compensation to people who need it. If they can ignore a doctor’s opinion, they can justify making any cuts they want.
- And there’s the same downloading problem also – when the WSIB denies covering a medical expense for a work injury, the cost gets picked up by OHIP. So the costs are forced onto the public purse again.
- The solution to all of this is pretty simple – we need it to be clear in the legislation and policy that the WSIB should prioritize and respect the evidence from our treating healthcare professionals.

Using “pre-existing conditions” to cut benefits

- A third major issue for injured workers is the WSIB’s practice of blaming long-term disabilities on “pre-existing conditions,” rather than accepting that they were caused by work injuries.
- In many cases, the “pre-existing conditions” were things that were never diagnosed as problems before the work injury, and never caused any symptoms or issues. People were getting on with their lives and their work just fine, and likely would have continued on with no problems. But they had an injury at work, and the injury changed everything.
- In fact, the WSIB’s interpretation of “pre-existing conditions” is so broad that it includes factors that are simply a part of normal aging. Rather than treating injured workers like human beings, we’re treated like used cars that have depreciating value as we age.
- This happens both with physical injuries and mental health conditions. On the physical side, if a worker slips and falls on their back at work, the WSIB will often say their long-term back injury is just because they’re old – even if they never had back problems before.
- On the mental health side, the WSIB will mine through our medical history, and any past episode of stress or anxiety – like a family member passing away or parents getting divorced – will become an excuse the WSIB can latch onto, instead of accepting that depression, stress, and anxiety is related to our injury and the fallout from it.
- All of this is different from the WSIB’s past policy of only reducing benefits if someone has a “pre-existing impairment,” which is actually something that did affect them before the accident. We need the WSIB to go back to this system, and to stop cutting benefits because of things that never caused us any issues before the work injury.

Asks to make of MPPs

- Read out the petitions in the Legislature
- Ask a question during Question Period or make a Member’s statement in the Legislature
- Write a letter to the Premier saying you support the issues we’ve raised
- Raise the issues in your Caucus, and we will follow up with you to see how that went



A campaign by the **Ontario Network of Injured Workers' Groups**

CAMPAIGN INFO PACKAGE

Further Resources

For campaign info, or to join our mailing list, email:
workerscompisaright@gmail.com

For the complete campaign report and up to date news, visit:
injuredworkersonline.org/workers-comp-is-a-right-campaign/

To get your own campaign materials for online and print, visit:
injuredworkersonline.org/workers-comp-is-a-right-campaign/action-toolkit/

Follow the Ontario Network of Injured Workers' Groups online at:
Twitter: [@ONIWG](https://twitter.com/ONIWG)
Facebook: facebook.com/OntarioNetworkIWG/

To find injured worker groups and supports in your community, visit:
injuredworkersonline.org/resources/links/



WE DEMAND: NO CUTS BASED ON PHANTOM JOBS

Background: "NO DEEMING"

"Deeming" (also called "determining") refers to a practice used by the WSIB in which they pretend an injured worker has a job that they do not actually have. The Board then uses the "phantom job" as an excuse to cut benefit payments.

For example, a construction worker who permanently injured while making \$20 per hour may receive full wage loss benefits from the WSIB for a while. After a time, the WSIB may agree that the worker cannot return to construction, but may decide they could be a minimum wage cashier, and will reduce benefits by \$11.40 per hour - *even if the worker is not medically able to do the work, or unable to find a job.*

Why is this important?

Deeming reduces injured worker benefits, and systematically leads to poverty. **This forces people onto publicly funded systems like Welfare (OW) and Disability (ODSP)**, instead of receiving the employer funded benefits they are entitled to.

If an injured worker tried to increase their benefits by pretending they were making *less* money than they are, they would be penalized for cheating. But when the WSIB cheats and pretends a worker is earning *more* than they really are, the benefits are reduced and the Board keeps the money. This is unfair and unjust!

In addition, Ontario has just announced a long overdue increase to minimum wage, and while this is an excellent initiative, *the WSIB will use the minimum wage increase to pretend people are earning even higher phantom wages, and cut their benefits even further!*

(See the chart on the next page)

Effects of WSIB's DEEMING policy

Pre-injury Wage Single no dependants	Net Average Earnings - (40 hour work-week avg.)	Loss of Earnings is calculated at 85% of net	Impact of Deeming Min Wage Deducted \$11.40 x 40 hours x 85% + deductions	Impact of Deeming Min Wage Deducted \$15.00 x 40 hours x 85% + deductions	Reliance on Social Support Systems (Municipalities, OW, ODSP) <i>*if eligible</i>	Impact to Injured Worker
\$13.00 per hour	\$520.00 - deductions = \$437.88	85% of \$437.88 = \$372.20	\$372.88 - \$332.26 = \$40.62 Loss Of Earnings paid (weekly)	\$0 Loss Of Earnings paid (weekly)	Worker heavily reliant* on provincial and municipal systems and becomes fully reliant* based on \$15.00 min wage	Esteem plus abject poverty and all ailments and afflictions associated with it.
\$28.00 per hour	\$1120.00 - deductions = \$864.31	85% of \$864.31 = \$734.66	\$734.66 - \$331.57 = \$403.09 Loss Of Earnings paid (weekly)	\$734.66 - \$422.92 = \$311.68 Loss Of Earnings paid (weekly)	Worker may* qualify for some social assistance.	
\$20.00 per hour	\$800.00 - deductions = \$647.02	85% of \$647.02 = \$549.97	\$549.97 - \$331.58 = \$218.39 Loss Of Earnings paid (weekly)	\$549.97 - \$422.99 = \$126.98 Loss Of Earnings paid (weekly)	Worker may* qualify for some social assistance but becomes partially reliant* based on \$15.00 min wage	

As the above chart shows, deeming causes injured worker poverty by reducing or completely eliminating benefits. The WSIB does this by pretending workers are employed or employable when they are not. Poverty creates whole new sets of physical and psychological health issues, and affects family and community well being.

What is the demand?

Injured workers and their allies are demanding the abolishment of the WSIB's unfair practice of deeming. Stop discriminating against injured workers by treating them like liars.

What are the solutions?

- Legislative changes must be introduced to prevent WSIB from “deeming” an injured worker **unless it has documentation to prove that the worker has turned down an offer of suitable work**. This is known as the “tangible indication test,” and it was proposed as the standard for deeming when the system was first introduced. If this test is not met, the WSIB must pay benefits based on actual lost wages.
- Return to one-year support and compensation for job search assistance.** The WSIB must provide permanently disabled injured workers with meaningful assistance in securing suitable work, via supportive vocational rehabilitation counsellors and wage loss benefits while they engage in their job search.



WE DEMAND: LISTEN TO OUR DOCTORS

Background: OUR DOCTORS KNOW US BEST

In 2016 and 2017, a series of reports were released by injured worker groups, labour organizations, and legal clinics that said what injured workers and advocates have long known: There are serious problems with the way that the WSIB considers medical evidence.* These reports highlighted a range of issues, including failing to heed medical advice regarding readiness to return to work, insufficient treatment, blaming 'pre-existing conditions' for injuries clearly caused at work, questionable use of Board funded specialty clinics, using "expected recovery times" to declare a worker healed, purchasing reports from private medical consultants who never meet the worker (also called "paper doctors"), and even simply ignoring the available medical evidence all together.

Why is this important?

When someone is injured or sick, one of the most important relationships they have is with the treating healthcare professionals that are helping them to get better. The doctors, nurses, psychologists, and physiotherapists who are treating injured workers know more about your conditions than anyone else. And yet the WSIB ignores the advice of injured workers' doctors and cuts their benefits or sends them back to work before they are medically ready.

When someone gets sent back to work too early and against their doctor's advice, they risk re-injury. When an injured worker's benefits are cut before they are better, they face poverty and all of the social and medical problems associated with it.

***Further Reading:**

No Evidence: Decisions of the WSIB - by IAVGO Legal Clinic, 2017

Bad Medicine - by IAVGO Legal Clinic and Anthony Singleton, 2017

Prescription Overruled - by ONIWG and Ontario Federation of Labour, 2016

Did You Know...

- *Medical expenses for injured workers are supposed to be paid for by the compensation system, not Ontario's public health insurance plan (OHIP). This means that often when a medical expense for an injured worker is denied by the WSIB, the burden of that cost falls on every taxpayer in the province.*
- *A recent review of just one year of appeals tribunal decisions found hundreds and hundreds of examples of cases in which the WSIB inappropriately ignored medical evidence on file in order to reject a worker's claim.*
- *Some of the fee schedules used by the WSIB to pay healthcare professionals for services offer financial incentives for providers to end care sooner.*

What is the demand?

The WSIB must listen to injured workers' treating health care team.

What are the solutions?

- **Institute clear legislation that prioritizes and respects the evidence put forward by the treating health professionals** who know the injured workers best. Address gaps in information with treating doctors before seeking outside opinions.
- Establish a process **independent of the WSIB** to resolve medical disputes.
- When medical consultants are necessary, the reasoning for this must be quickly and clearly communicated to the worker, and the **doctors should be drawn from a roster maintained by an independent body**. The 'paper doctor' role should be re-imagined as one of supportive case-consultant, rather than end-of-the-road expert opinion.
- Before deciding that a worker has recovered from an injury, **decision-makers should have a report from the worker's treating physician** verifying recovery.
- When it is determined that a worker has a permanent disability, this worker's **"Non-Economic Loss" assessment must be done by a physician in person**, rather than by a WSIB nurse consultant who simply reads the file.



WE DEMAND: STOP CUTTING BENEFITS BASED ON 'PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS'

Background: PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS

Around 2012, after hiring a notorious American insurance doctor to give them policy suggestions, the WSIB began a practice of reducing or eliminating injured workers' benefits by aggressively penalizing people who they felt had "pre-existing conditions." This has taken many forms, including reducing the length of time workers receive wage loss and healthcare benefits, cutting the Non-Economic Loss (NEL) awards given for permanent injuries, and more. This differs from the Board's pre 2012 practice of limiting benefits only for "pre-existing impairments."

What's the difference? A *pre-existing impairment* is a condition that has symptoms, and that had previously limited a worker's ability to do their job. What the WSIB now calls *pre-existing conditions* includes things that may have never affected the worker before.

Why is this important?

The WSIB's focus on "pre-existing conditions" is one of its most common methods of cutting people off benefits. If everything can be blamed on a "pre-existing condition" instead of the work injury, the WSIB can avoid paying benefits and save itself money. Many of these "pre-existing conditions" were never diagnosed by a doctor before the work injury, and never caused any symptoms. In fact, the WSIB's interpretation of "pre-existing conditions" is so broad that they include factors that are simply a part of normal aging. Rather than treating injured workers as human beings, they are treated like used cars, with depreciating value as they age.

"It is a change in benefits with no change in legislation. I think we should be ashamed of the system, you have some of the most vulnerable people in our society being victimized by a corporate structure."

-Ron Ellis, former chair of the WSIB's appeals Tribunal (CBC News, Oct 2016)

HOW THIS POLICY WORKS IN PRACTICE:

A worker in her 50s who has spent her lifetime in manual labour - but has never been injured or had any symptoms of spine problems - slips and hurts her back at work. The WSIB may approve benefits for a short time, but after she gets an MRI, the Board sees that she has some “degeneration” in her spinal discs. Even though this degeneration was likely caused by a lifetime of heavy lifting at work, and has never prevented her from doing her job every day for the last 30 years, the Board’s policy dictates that after a few weeks, her ongoing and permanent pain is not caused by her fall at work, and ends her benefits.

The same is true for mental health injuries. Advocates have seen cases of mental stress denied because the worker may have offhandedly reported feeling some depression to their family doctor five years ago. There are even cases where post-injury family breakdown is blamed as a pre-existing condition responsible for an injured worker’s psychological impairment.

There is a long established legal understanding called the “thin skull” principle that is meant to protect all workers. At its most basic, it means that if two people experience a head injury of equal force, and one is more injured because their skull happens to be thinner, the more injured person cannot be penalized simply because of the state of their pre-injury body. In the context of workers’ compensation, it means that each injury must be looked at on the basis of how it affected the injured worker in question, not how it might have affected some imagined “average worker.” The WSIB’s pre-existing conditions policy is creating a system in which only people with perfect bodies and minds can receive full compensation, and this is unfair.

What is the demand?

The WSIB has a responsibility to honour the long legal history of the thin skull principle, and must stop reducing injured workers' benefits because of pre-existing conditions that have never caused the worker any symptoms.

What are the solutions?

- **The WSIB must return to its previous policy and practice of only reducing benefits if a worker had a verifiable pre-existing impairment.** “Pre-existing conditions” that were asymptomatic and undiagnosed prior to the work injury, and that did not affect a worker’s functioning, must not be used to cut or deny benefits.
- **These principles must be codified** in the Workplace Safety & Insurance Act, to prevent the WSIB from attempting to skirt them again in the future.

Preparing for your MPP Visit

Why are we doing this?

We want to educate the MPP about our issues; they may not know anything about what injured workers face in Ontario.

WSIB and employers may want the system to work in ways that are unfair to us; we need to provide another perspective to politicians so they also hear our side and our solutions.

This is an opportunity to train ourselves and other supporters on our message and how to talk clearly about our campaign demands.

The MPP's job is to serve us. That's why they were elected. We want them to take action that will support our issues.

Your MPP Visit Team

Always go as a team. Decide the following together:

- What is our main goal today?
- Who will be the lead spokesperson?
- Who will address which issues? Choose an area important to you.
- Who will answer questions?
- Who will make the "ask"?
- Who will take notes?

Planning the Meeting

Prepare

Have a pre-meeting: members of the team should meet before the visit to discuss what you're going to say. Decide what key points you want to make.

Practice

Most meetings are 30 minutes. It's important to practice to make sure we get our main points in. Keep it clear and short. Don't try to cover too much ground. Explain your

position. Don't assume everyone understands your point of view; remember we are educating the politicians.

MPP Visit Checklist

Before the meeting

- Research the MPP you are visiting. What issues are they connected to? Do they already have a position on your issue? Be prepared.
- Prepare and bring materials in a package you'd like the politicians to have
- Be there on time to meet your team early, review the plan.
- Make sure everyone knows their role. Make sure you know who will take the lead and who will take notes to report back.

During the meeting

- Introduce yourselves (Your organization or network, then each individual, be brief!)
- Make your statement or position. (We are here today because...)
- Give your package to the MPP and the assistant
- Clarify or respond to questions – don't get side-tracked!
- Be clear in your message to the MPP.
- Be clear about what your request from them. Get a clear commitment if possible.
- Make a commitment to follow-up. Get the business card of the assistant also
- Thank them for their time, we'll be in touch!

After the meeting

1. Sit down and talk about what was said during the meeting. Make sure everything is reflected in the meeting notes.
2. Decide what, if any, follow-up action is required and who will do it.
3. Make sure everyone feels okay!
4. Send a thank you letter/email to the politician. Include any additional information that was promised. Repeat your main requests.

Stay Focused. Guidelines to Stay on Track.

Stick to the subject!

Our goal is to persuade the people in the room to support our position. Speak about what you know (your own story is best) and how it affects other workers, family and community. Your time is short and valuable.

Anticipate questions.

Try and be prepared to answer questions that politicians may have. Don't be afraid to say you don't know the answer to some questions. We can offer to get back with information later (make sure we follow through).

Keep control of the meeting.

Don't get sidetracked, stick to the issue. Politicians sometimes try and tell us their stories, which take up our time. Have the lead keep the group and the MPP on point.

Look for the positives.

Try to prevent outright rejection of your position. Emphasise areas of agreement, not differences. Don't be discouraged. Not everyone will be supportive. That's okay, find the ones that are.

Educate, but within reason.

If the MPP is asking LOTS of questions that are taking away from your main points, refer them to your package or ask if you can answer that question later. You may be educating someone who doesn't know much about your issue, but the main goal is to education through your demands.

Other Ways to Make Your Meeting Memorable

Use props.

Make it fun by bringing along some memorable props. For example – Workers' Action Centre members brought along drills, screwdrivers and hammers with the message "Fix the Bill" and a \$10 bill encased in ice to talk about the minimum wage being frozen.

Poster or leaflet around the MPP's office.

Let other constituents know about your cause. Ask them to make a call or send an email on your behalf.

Can't get a meeting? Just show up!

Sometimes you may get lucky and get some time with the MPP. Drop off your materials and make an appointment in person with your group. Be respectful of other constituents who are waiting for their appointment.