

## **BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH CONGRESS**

You have probably signed dozens of petitions directed to a member of Congress, sent emails and even called or visited an office from time to time.

Your impact grows if you take the steps to turn those contacts into a relationship. Here are some ways to do that:

- Send a letter identifying several members as representatives of Veterans For Peace. Provide information on the issue(s) you wish to address and ask for a 20-30 minute meeting with the Senator or Representative the next time they are in town. Check suggestions for [preparing for a meeting with Congress](#). You may want to ask for an annual meeting to exchange views.
- It is a nice touch to begin a relationship with a thank you. Research your member at GovTrack.us and see if you can find some legislation or action you can mention. For example, in July, 2014 370 members of the House of Representatives passed H. Con. Resolution 105, that calls for the executive branch to attain explicit approval from Congress before deploying troops to Iraq in a "sustained combat role," in Iraq in an effort to prevent a new war.
- Identify yourself as a member of Veterans For Peace in each contact with the local or D.C. office. They will begin to notice a consistent, informed, questioning voice.
- When you call regarding a specific bill, ask to leave your message with the legislative aide for that area. It will usually be the aide for military or foreign affairs.
- Keep this aide's name and phone number. It can be as important to work with them as to work with the legislator. They are likely to have more time to hear you out and have a lot of influence on the member's policies.
- Sometimes an aide in the local office has influence on policy or can set up Skype meetings for you with Washington staff.
- If you have trouble getting a meaningful meeting with someone, raise your issue in a letter to the editor of your local newspaper and mention the name of your members of Congress in the letter