

Brit Tzedek v'Shalom

Advocacy Meeting Outline and Tips

Components of a Brit Tzedek advocacy meeting

I. Introductions

- Thank the Member or staffer for meeting with you.
- Briefly introduce yourself around the table: name, hometown, congregation, any Brit Tzedek leadership role, any leadership role in the Jewish or secular community, your connection to Israel, any political experience or connection to the Member.
- Reference any previous meetings Brit Tzedek has had with this office.

II. Describing Brit Tzedek nationally and locally

- Brit Tzedek is the largest Jewish grassroots peace organization in the country with a network of over 36,000 supporters and 39 chapters across the country, who are deeply committed to Israel's well-being through a negotiated two-state resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- In your district/state we have [XXX] supporters. Locally we have worked with [list other Jewish or prominent communities you have worked with].
- We are here in DC as part of Brit Tzedek's 3rd annual National Advocacy Days conference, which has brought Jewish activists from across the country to advocate in support of pro-Israel, pro-peace policies.
- We believe that a negotiated two-state resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is in the best interests of Israel's long-term peace and security as well as broader U.S. interests in the region.
- We are supported by polls that consistently show large majorities of the American Jewish community support a two-state solution.¹ These numbers are almost identical to similar polls of Israelis and Palestinians.
- Nationally, we are in the midst of a major campaign called "Let's Talk" – demonstrating the significant American Jewish support for vigorous U.S. diplomatic engagement to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. [show petition]

III. Current talking points and the "ASK" [see handout]

V. Concluding the meeting

- Ask them questions:
 1. What are your/the Senator's/the Congressman's thoughts on these issues (including the "ask")?

¹ Poll of 500 Jews by Zogby Intl. for Americans for Peace Now (2004), showing 85% of American Jews support a two-state solution.

2. How can Brit Tzedek best work with you to support our shared vision of a two-state solution?
- Follow up:
 1. Ask about the best means to followup and maintain future contact with the office. Please try to get names, contact information, and best forms of communication.
 2. Offer yourselves and Brit Tzedek as a resource on Israel issues. Encourage them to contact us when new legislation arises.
 3. Ask if there is anything you can do to help them be more active on our issue. (publishing letters to the editor, holding events, etc.)
 4. [If they are supportive of our cause]: Ask if they would be interested in speaking at a local Brit Tzedek event back home.
 - Thank them for meeting with you.

VI. After the meeting: Fill out a meeting report!

General tips for a Brit Tzedek advocacy meeting

- **Follow the group leader:**
Each delegation will have one person designated as the group leader who will introduce the group, assign roles to various participants, and orchestrate the answering of questions. Please follow and defer to the group leader throughout the meeting.
- **Stay “on message”:**
Given the very little time we have in a Congressional office, it is critical that we use it effectively. Please do your best to keep the conversation focused on Brit Tzedek’s message and the talking points, even if the Member/staff leads the conversation in a different direction. Also, while many participants have extensive experience and knowledge in these issues, please avoid presenting personal opinions or conjectures of Brit Tzedek policy (if you’re not sure its policy, please don’t say it ;).
- **Be professional:**
Please be on time, if not 5 minutes early for every meeting. Please dress professionally, in formal business attire, with a Brit Tzedek pin if you have one.
- **Be polite:**
Please do not interrupt or argue with the Member or staff. Sometimes, Members/staff may disagree with you and say things that are completely wrong or offensive. Please try to ignore such statements and seek out points of commonality.
- **Keep the meeting conversational:**
The materials we provide are guidelines to walk you through a meeting with a Member of Congress. While staying within the general framework, feel free to choose the most salient points and put them into your own words. A casual, conversational meeting is always the most well received.

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FAQs for Advocacy Meetings

1. What is your position on the Quartet conditions and the Hamas-led Palestinian unity government? (aka, How can we talk/give money to Hamas? Is there a Palestinian partner for peace? Etc)

- We believe that the Quartet conditions (recognizing Israel, renouncing violence, and abiding by previous agreements) are critical goals of any final status agreement, but should not be preconditions for dialogue or for restarting the negotiating process between Israel and the Palestinians.
 - Recognition of Israel has never before been a precondition for negotiating. For example, recognition was a result of, not a precondition for, Israel's peace negotiations with both Jordan and Egypt, and its early talks with the PLO.
 - Negotiations will happen with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, in his role as chair of the PLO. The new unity government has given him explicit authority to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinian people and has pledged to present the results of the negotiations as a referendum to the Palestinian people.
 - Recent polls demonstrate that 67% of Israelis support negotiations with a Palestinian unity government. In addition, recent polls of Palestinians found that 60% believe a Hamas-led government should negotiate with Israel.
- Regarding aid to the Palestinian unity government, U.S. law prevents any U.S. funds from going to a foreign terrorist organization, and certainly no tax dollars should ever end up supporting terrorist activities.
- However, we urge the U.S. government to be flexible in finding means to provide desperately needed funding to the Palestinian people in ways that bypass Hamas, such as through the Temporary International Mechanism or through the office of the new Finance Minister Salam Fayyad, a former World Bank official.

2. What is your position on dealing with Iran?

- We recognize the serious threat posed by Iran to both the United States and Israel, particularly in regards to threat of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons, its financial support for Hezbollah and Hamas, and its destabilizing role in Iraq. We also deplore Iranian President Ahmadinejad's blatantly anti-Semitic and anti-Israel pronouncements.
- Nevertheless, military action against Iran would be harmful to the United States, could place Israel directly in the line of fire, and might draw Israel into a military confrontation.
- We believe that the US should end its policy of saber rattling and trying to isolate Iran, which only enhances President Ahmadinejad's status, and instead diplomatically engage Iran in order to address the most pressing issues.
- In addition, we believe that robust U.S. engagement in Israeli-Palestinian and broader Arab-Israeli peacemaking would further undercut Iran's growing stature in the region and

bolster moderate Arab states.

3. What is your position on Syria?

- We call upon the U.S. government to support diplomatic engagement with the government of Syria and to bi-lateral talks between Israel and Syria about a non-violent resolution of the Israeli-Syrian conflict.
- We believe that Israel should resume talks with Syria with the goal of reaching resolution of all outstanding issues, including internationally recognized borders, Israel's security needs, the future of Israel's settlements on the Golan Heights, and full diplomatic recognition of Israel.
- We believe that talks between Israel and Syria have the potential to promote further progress toward a negotiated resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by reducing or eliminating Syrian support for Hezbollah and eliminating the safe haven it now provides for Hamas' hard-line political wing in exile, led by Khaled Meshal.

4. What is your position on the security barrier/fence/wall?

- We firmly believe that Israel has the right to defend its citizens. However, the current route of the barrier is neither the most effective way to provide security, nor will it move Israel and the Palestinians down the path to negotiations—the only way towards true long-term security.
- The route of the fence, which deviates significantly from the 1967 border (the green line), prejudices borders and thwarts the future formation of a viable Palestinian state.
- The current route of the barrier disrupts the lives of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, cutting them off from family, work, education, medical and other services. This situation can only create greater unrest and resentment among the Palestinian people, fanning the flames of those who incite violence.
- We support the U.S. government's commitment to ensuring that Israel constructs its security barrier in a manner consistent with its obligations under the Road Map to Peace in the Middle East. In the face of American pressure, the Israeli government has often indicated to Washington that it will reroute some of the portions of the barrier that have the most detrimental impact Palestinians.

5. What is the difference between Brit Tzedek and AIPAC?

- AIPAC's primary mission is to generate U.S. support for the actions and policies of the Israeli government. Brit Tzedek's primary mission is to encourage U.S. policies that will successfully bring an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a negotiated two-state solution. We believe this is in the best interests of Israel and the United States.
- Brit Tzedek is changing the definition of what it means to be pro-Israel in Washington and the American Jewish community. We believe it is pro-Israel to be pro-peace.