



Meeting Ethics Frequently Asked Questions

Can I mention where I work?

Yes. Your employer and professional role may provide helpful context for your perspective as a nurse. However, make it clear that you are participating in your personal capacity representing HPNA and are not speaking on behalf of your employer.

Should I use my personal or work email?

We recommend using a personal email address. This helps avoid confusion about whether your employer is sponsoring or endorsing your advocacy.

How should I introduce myself?

A simple introduction works well: “My name is Jane Smith, and I’m a constituent from _____. I’m a _____ nurse at ABC Medical Center, but I’m here representing HPNA in a personal capacity and not on behalf of my employer.”

The distinction is “**I work at...**” versus “**I represent...**”

Can constituents bring gifts, food, or promotional items to congressional offices?

Safest answer is, don’t. House and Senate personnel are subject to detailed gift restrictions. Informational materials are always welcome.

Can we buy lunch or coffee for Hill staff?

As a general advocacy practice, we would advise not offering to pay. House rules, for example, permit only limited nominal refreshments in certain business meetings. Senate gift rules similarly impose significant limits.

Can constituents leave materials behind?

Yes, fact sheets, one-pagers, constituent stories, and similar informational materials are encouraged.

Can we watch proceedings and committee hearings?

Both the House and the Senate maintain public galleries where visitors can observe floor proceedings. Arriving early improves your chances of getting a seat. Many committee hearings offer limited public seating. When inside galleries, follow decorum guidelines: no cheering or signs, and electronic devices should be muted.

Capitol Hill is for politics – right?

There are strict barriers between congressional work and campaigns. Do not discuss any campaigns while meeting with staff or talking to Members of Congress. Avoid “political” conversations as staff and members do work across the political aisle more than the public realizes.