



## **Visiting Your Member of Congress and Senators**

During a congressional recess is the best time to meet locally with your representatives and senators. During this time, legislators make time to meet with constituents and many hold town hall meetings or forums, where constituent input is encouraged. Like any other encounter you may have, these face to face meetings with legislators or staff is the most effective way to convey a message about a specific legislative issue. Below are some suggestions to consider when planning a visit to a congressional office.

Find information on your member of the House of Representatives: [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) Go to your member's webpage where schedules and further information on how to contact their local office can be found.

Find information on your Senators: [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) Go to your senators' webpage where schedules and further information on how to contact their local office can be found.

Tips for a successful visit from [CongressLink](http://CongressLink):

- Plan Your Visit Carefully. Be clear about what it is you want to achieve; determine in advance which member or staff you need to meet with to achieve your purpose.
- Make an Appointment. When attempting to meet with a member, contact the Appointment Secretary/Scheduler. Explain your purpose and who you represent. It is easier for congressional staff to arrange a meeting if they know what you wish to discuss and your relationship to the area or interests represented by the member.
- Be Prompt and Patient. When it is time to meet with a member, be punctual and be patient. It is not uncommon for a member to be late, or to have a meeting interrupted, due to the member's crowded schedule. If interruptions do occur, be flexible. When the opportunity presents itself, continue your meeting with a member's staff.
- Be Prepared. Whenever possible, bring to the meeting information and materials supporting your position. Members are required to take positions on many different issues. In some instances, a member may lack important details about the pros and cons of a particular matter. It is therefore helpful to share with the member information and examples that demonstrate clearly the impact or benefits associated with a particular issue or piece of legislation.
- Be Political (which doesn't mean partisan). Members of Congress want to represent the best interests of their district or state. Wherever possible, demonstrate the connection between what you are requesting and the interests of the member's constituency. If possible, describe for the member how you or your group can be of assistance to him/her. Where it is appropriate, remember to ask for a commitment. Remember that the member does not have to be in your political party to help.
- Be Responsive. Be prepared to answer questions or provide additional information, in the event the member expresses interest or asks questions. Follow up the meeting with a thank you letter that outlines the different points covered during the meeting, and send along any additional information and materials requested.

### **For Additional Information Please Contact:**

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