

■ Visiting Your Member of Congress in Your District

Gather a Group and Get an Appointment

- Invite people who know the issue to join you. It helps to have people who are affected by the issue and people who are well-known and respected, e.g. clergy, head of an organization.
- Call the district office to request a meeting time. Phone numbers are in the government pages of the phone book, or online at <http://capwiz.com/networklobby/home/> -- enter your zip code in “Elected Officials” box, click on “info” under the picture and then click on “contact” tab.
- Tell the scheduler what issue you will discuss and who will be present during the visit.
- The district office may need a written request. Follow up with a call to confirm a date. Be persistent.
- If you are not able to meet with your Member of Congress, it can be valuable to engage staff in dialogue about the issue and build relationships with them. You can also ask about opportunities to meet the Member of Congress at town hall meetings.

Prepare for the Visit

- Know something about your Congressperson's likely position on the issue; your Congressperson's web site is a good source of information.
- Review background on the issue and current, specific legislation relating to it.
- Prepare a one-page summary of your position to leave with your Member of Congress.
- Make a plan for the visit:
 - Choose a spokesperson to start the visit
 - Decide who will say what
 - Think of questions and counterpoints that may come up and plan possible responses
- Practice the visit

Make the Visit

- Dress for success and be on time.
- Explain who you are and why you are there.
- Be polite and firm in explaining your position; avoid criticism.
- Use examples from your personal experience.
- Be clear, concise, compelling and credible.
- Bring the conversation back to your message if it goes off track.
- Ask what the Member's position is on the issue or bill; ask what it would take to get her/him to support the issue or legislation.
- Record key points of the conversation and questions you can't answer; volunteer to find information and get back to your Member of Congress or staff.
- Leave a short written summary of your position.

Follow Up on the Visit

- Write a thank you note to your Congressperson with a summary of your conversation.
- Send the answers to any questions you said you'd research.
- Continue the dialogue with your Member of Congress and her/his staff.

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Lobby Visit Planning Sheet

Member: _____ Office Location: _____
Staff: _____ Date/Time of Visit: _____

1. Facts about the Member of Congress

Party: _____ Religion: _____
Term: When Elected: _____ When up for re-election: _____
Committees: _____
Record on this issue: _____
Positive Contributions: _____

2. People making this visit:

Tip: Each person introduces self – name; where you live; if you are a constituent; name groups you represent and how many people are involved in each.

Spokesperson _____ Note-taker _____

Tip: Say something positive about the Member at the beginning of the visit

Manager/Timekeeper _____

Tip: Don't let the Member/staff person take the conversation off track

| Speaker: _____ | What they will say: _____ |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

Tip: Tell a personal story that connects you with the issue.

3. About the Issue

Bill Number: _____ Bill Name: _____

Talking Points (separate page)

What will we leave with the Member/staff? _____

What do we want the Member to do? _____

Tips: Ask for a specific action.

Thank the Member/staff for their time and consideration.

4. Follow Up

Who will write the thank-you note? _____

What additional information needs to be sent? _____

What is the next step? _____