HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF
YOUR CONGRESSIONAL ADVOCACY VISIT

“QUICK PLANNER”

After you have made an appointment with your federally elected representative, there are a few things you can do to ensure you are as effective as possible during your meeting.

PREPARE FOR YOUR VISIT

1. Know something about the district / state represented by the person you are about to meet:
   - What are the largest cities;
   - Where does he / she hail from;
   - What are the largest industries in the area your Congressperson / Senator represents?
     - All this information can usually be found by looking at your Senator / Representative’s website.

2. Know something about the work of the Member of Congress you are meeting with:
   - What Committees does he / she serve on?
   - What issues has the Senator / Representative focused on during his / her tenure in Congress?
   - How long has the Senator / Representative been in Congress?
   - When is he / she up for re-election?
   - What did the Senator / Representative do prior to first being elected to Congress?
     - All this information can usually be found by looking at your Senator / Representative’s website.
   - How did the Senator / Representative score on the last few NAACP report cards?
     - This information can be found at www.NAACP.org or by contacting the NAACP Washington Bureau.

3. Review the issue(s) you wish to discuss: limit the number of issues to no more than 3 per visit.

4. Prepare a one-page summary of your position to leave with your Senator / Representative.
   - Include examples of the problem from the district / state if possible.

5. Make a plan for your visit:
   - Chose a spokesperson for the introductions
   - Decide who will say what
   - Identify who will provide any follow-up information requested during the meeting

6. Practice for the visit
DURING YOUR VISIT

- Dress for success in business attire and be on time!

- Explain who you are, why you are there, and be certain to explain that you are a constituent (let them know what town / area you live in).
  - Have each person introduce him- or herself by sharing their name and where they are from. Also talk a little about the group you represent (how many members, frequency of meetings)

- Be clear, concise, compelling and credible. Remember that there is often a strict time limit to these meetings!

- Be polite yet firm in explaining your position; try to avoid direct criticism.

- Bring the message back to your issue if it goes off track.

- Use personal examples or examples that you know of from the Senators state / district if you can.

- Be clear about what you want the Senator / Representative to do.

- Record key points of the conversation as well as any questions that you can’t answer; promise to get back with a response within one week.

- Leave a summary of your position on the issue(s) you discussed.

FOLLOW UP ON YOUR VISIT

- Write a note to the Senator / Representative within 72 hours thank him / her for the visit and reiterating your conversation

- Send any answers to questions that were posed during the meeting as quickly as possible

- Be certain to talk among your group to ensure that you all have similar memories of the visit

- Continue to contact your Senator / Representative to maintain an open dialogue on the issue(s) that are important to you.
Name of Senator / Representative: _______________________________
Office location: ________________________________

Date of visit: ______________ Time of Visit: __________ # of people attending ___

Facts about the Person you are visiting and the area he / she represents:
When first elected: _________ When next up for reelection: _______
Hometown:______________ Large cities in district:____________________
Committees ___________________________________________________
Issues member has focused on while in Congress: ____________________
NAACP score in last Congress: ___________________

People making the visit:

Spokesperson: ________________________________
Group note-taker: ______________________________
Timekeeper (person charged with making sure nobody talks too long):
______________________________

Who will write the follow-up thank you note for the group? ________________
Who will ensure that any follow-up information is sent in a timely fashion?
______________________________

Issues to be discussed:
1. 
2. 
3. 

Who will speak about what:
SPEAKER ISSUE
_________________________________ ____________________________
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