



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

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

More...



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.



ADVOCACY PLANNER

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
