

## TIPS FOR VISITING CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

*Follow these tips to ensure a successful meeting.*

- Be on time for your meetings. Be sure to confirm where your meeting will take place and allocate plenty of time to get through security, as other groups will likely be trying to enter the buildings, and lines may be long.
- If you are late, the staff person or Member of Congress may not be able to accommodate the meeting.
- Don't be surprised if your meeting takes place in the reception room, cafeteria, hallway, or outside. If you are meeting in a public place, be aware that others may hear your conversation.
- Explain why you are visiting. People you meet may not follow your issue as closely as you do. Be ready to provide background on where things stand.
- Be brief and get to the point quickly. Review your key points ahead of time. Refer back to them if necessary. Most meetings last only 15 or 20 minutes.
- Don't be afraid to admit you don't know something you may be asked. Don't make up answers; instead, offer to follow up with more information later.
- Ask the lawmaker for their position on the issues you are advocating. If the Member of Congress supports our position, thank them for their support.
- If the Member does not support your position, briefly share your reasons for supporting it. Speak from the heart and give examples. Do not argue or badmouth others.
- Leave the packet with background materials with the staff. Encourage them to contact you for more information if needed.
- The team leader will take notes during the meeting or designate another person to take notes. Make sure you have the name of the correct staff person, and note any additional follow-up required or information requested.
- Remember your power. You or members of your local are constituents, and you have every right to present your positions and expect consideration in return.

