



Tips for a Successful Day at the Capitol

Remember that most visits with legislators are brief (15-20 minutes) and often with staffers who are responsible for the issue.

Be Prepared

Review and rehearse the key points you want to make. Remember to share economic impact information about your own company.

Be on Time

But don't be surprised if they're not. Legislators' schedules are hectic. You need to be flexible and patient. Leave buffer time for a successful or delayed meeting. If you are unexpectedly running late, call the office as a courtesy.

Be Conscientious of Numbers

Meeting space is very limited and causes anxiety for offices trying to facilitate multiple meetings. Standing in the hall for a meeting is not uncommon. Priority should be given to constituents, if possible let them speak first.

Be Political

Introduce yourself, noting where you live or where your place of business is located (i.e., confirming that you are a constituent) and establishing a connection to the issue you'd like to discuss. During your conversation, relate situations to the member's city or district.

Be Concise

Plan on making no more than 3 key points, using personal and local examples to emphasize the need for the Senator/Representative's support. The Issue Briefs and Talking Points that ICSC provides will help you explain:

- What's the issue (purpose of visit)?
- What's the impact/importance (local/state/nation)?
- What you'd like the Senator/Representative to do?

Be Curious

Don't be afraid to ask where the legislator stands on the issue; and be tolerant of differing views, keeping dialogue open. Ask (don't demand) for reaction or feedback on your position. Respond to opposing viewpoints without being argumentative. Even if Members don't agree with your position, you can sometimes lessen the intensity of the opposition and perhaps even change it.

Be Responsive

Try to answer any questions asked, but if you can't, let them know ICSC will get back to them with the information.

Be Appreciative

Thank the Senator/Representative (or Staffer) for his/her time.

Be Smart

Always send a follow-up "thank you" letter, reiterating the points made during the meeting. If you promised to provide more information – provide it. Don't drop the ball – this is your opportunity to prove that you are a resource.

Be Sensitive

Don't mix politics and policy. Keep the discussion to the issue at hand (consult the Issue Briefs and Talking Points that ICSC provides for reference) and do not talk to the Senator/Representative about the upcoming election or his/her fundraising efforts. NEVER give campaign contributions in their office – it's illegal.

Provide Feedback to ICSC

Please let us know the Legislators' position on the issue(s) you discussed and if there is any follow up that we need to do with that office.