The Basics for Making a Hill Visit

Prior to Your Visit

- Scout out the meeting locations and plan accordingly for getting from meeting to meeting. Allow *at least* 15 minutes between meetings on the House side and 30 minutes for meetings between the House and Senate.
- The numbering system on the House side is building + floor + room number. So a meeting in 2243 is a meeting in Rayburn 2nd floor, room 43 (Cannon = no number [243], Longworth = 1 [1243], Rayburn = 2 [2243]).
- Rayburn is shaped like a spider, so the room numbers do not necessarily count up when walking the halls. Use the maps in the corridors to find the quickest ways to your meetings.
- Take some time to think through the talking points, both those provided by ASAE and how the work of your own organization speaks to the points. What's your personal association story that will make a lasting impression after your meeting?
- Confirm your appointment a day in advance and be prepared for the office to ask if you can reschedule to another time. Hill offices juggle numerous meetings (with constituents and other offices) as well as political responsibilities, and sometimes changes must be made.
- Research the member and their positions. If you are going in to discuss the importance of association meetings and conferences, have they sponsored a bill involving tax credits for business spending or a resolution to encourage travel to their area? Conversely, have they made speeches condemning Congressional travel as a boondoggle?
- Dress for a business meeting. Your attire will be noticed if it is not business dress.
- Know with whom you are meeting. While it is great to meet with a member of Congress, often you will end up meeting with a staff person. Here is a list of common terms used in a DC Congressional office:
    - Chief of Staff/Administrative Assistant: This is the top ranking staff person and the one who is closest to the member. Their word is essentially the member's word.
    - Legislative Director (LD): This is the staff person who manages the legislative staff and is responsible for managing all of the issue areas in the office. They may have their own issue portfolio as well as coordinating those of the legislative assistants.
    - Legislative Assistant (LA): An LA is an area specialist who has a list of issues they handle for the office, usually related in some way under headings like

"Commerce", "Tax", or "Women's Issues". They are the mid-level person most in the weeds on the topics and are likely the person with whom you'll meet.
  - Legislative Correspondent (LC): This is an entry-level person in the office who mainly deals with constituent requests and communications. They will sometimes fill in for an LA on a meeting. Many LCs go on to higher positions in an office, so treat them nicely.
  - Scheduler: The gatekeeper for the office. They handle the member of Congress' schedule and, in some cases, the meeting schedule for the office. If you treat them with respect, it will get you far in the office.

During Your Visit

- Show up on time or 5 minutes early. More often than not, your meeting will start late because the person with which you are meeting is running late, but do not let that affect your presentation. Just accept and stick to your talking points.
- Your meeting may be in the office or, if you are meeting with a member, in the hallway to another meeting, in the cafeteria, or in a committee room. Just roll with it!
- Your meeting will likely be no more than 15 minutes, so do not get sidetracked with chit-chat. Small talk is fine, but do not let it dominate the meeting.
- Do not, under any circumstances, bring up a campaign contribution or threaten a member or staffer to not vote for them. It destroys your credibility and may even be illegal.
- It is, however, ok for you to thank a member for supporting a position in the past that is related to your meeting ("I am here to discuss HR. 4 and wanted to thank the Congressman for signing on as a cosponsor").
- Mix facts with anecdotes. Hill offices love facts they can use themselves (especially from constituents) but it is often the personal story that sells the importance of an issue.
- Never, ever lie in your meeting. If you do not know something, be honest and say so but promise to send more information in the near future.
- Make your ask. Always end your meeting asking the member or staff whether they will support your position. Often you will get an ambiguous answer, but politely press them on when you can get an answer.
- Thank them for the meeting!

After the meeting

- Send a thank you note to the person with whom you met and provide any information you promised to provide.
- If you are going to the Hill as part of an association fly-in, give feedback to the association on how your meeting went and if they need to provide follow-up.
- Keep in touch with the office, either on the issue with which you met them or on any new issues. Keep the business relationship alive!