Preparing for Face-to-Face Meetings with Members of Congress

Quick Takes
• Advocates can leverage face-to-face meetings with Members of Congress and their staff to communicate their positions and build enduring relationships with their representatives
• However, meetings are brief and Members are busy; advocates should keep the tips below in mind to get the most of their meetings

What to Keep in Mind When Conducting a Meeting with a Member of Congress

1. Be on time
   • Arrive no more than 5 minutes before the meeting; Members are rarely available to meet earlier and Hill offices are too small to accommodate lingering constituents
   • Inform the Scheduler if you are going to be late in case another meeting time must be arranged

2. Be flexible
   • Prepare to meet with either the Member or the Member’s staff; treat both with equal respect
   • If the Member arrives in the middle of your meeting, continue as usual; and the Member will ask questions if needed

3. Stay on Topic
   • Raise only the issue you scheduled to discuss with the Member and the Member’s staff to keep the meeting focused and persuasive

4. Keep Politics Out of It
   • Do not discuss elections or campaign support in your meeting; it intimates that the Member is “for sale”
   • Respect the Member’s political views and relationships outside of the issue at hand

5. Leave Behind Brief Information
   • Leave behind a 1-2 page briefing with data points on the issue discussed with the Member; the document should serve as a helpful resource for staff as the issue moves through Congress