

## Making Contact: The Personal Visit

Delivering your message in person is probably the most effective means, but it may not be right for everyone or for every circumstance, so figure out what method works best for you.

Many legislators hold "office hours" back in their district on a regular basis, and if time is not a factor or the next scheduled series is coinciding with your timeframe for discussing your issue, this would be an opportunity to seize upon. If meeting at the Capitol, avoid times when the legislature is in full session.

At certain levels – particularly the U.S. Senate – the demands of time are such that many legislators must depend on staff to meet with you to discuss issues or concerns. Don't feel put off by this. The staff is often better informed on the details of the legislation and is very thorough at briefing the legislator on the content of the meetings.

### Tips for meeting with your legislator:

- Call the legislator's office to arrange an appointment. Be flexible and only ask for 15-30 minutes for a meeting.
- Keep your thoughts organized – create a one page brief with talking points about your issue.
- Emphasize the ways in which the issue will impact you and/or your industry
- Offer suggestions on how the legislation or issue can be changed (if necessary) or improved to benefit both you and the legislator.
- Keep it simple – too much detail can muddy your message.
- Leave behind information after the meeting for the staff and legislator to refer.
- Send a thank you letter to the legislator as well as any staff you may have met with following your meeting. (This not only shows the legislator that you appreciate sharing their time, but it also gives you the opportunity to remind them once again about your issue. A kind word about the person who helped you schedule the meeting might prove useful the next time you want to visit.)
- Don't start calling or dropping by the office regularly or un-announced.