HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR CONGRESSIONAL ADVOCACY VISIT
“QUICK PLANNER”

After you have made an appointment with your federally elected representative, there are a few things you can do to ensure you are as effective as possible during your meeting.

PREPARE FOR YOUR VISIT

- **Know something about the district / state represented by the person you are about to meet:**
  - What are the largest cities;
  - Where does he / she hail from;
  - What are the largest industries in the area your Congressperson / Senator represents?
    - All this information can usually be found by looking at your Senator / Representative’s website

- **Know something about the work of the Member of Congress you are meeting with:**
  - What Committees does he / she serve on?
  - What issues has the Senator / Representative focused on during his / her tenure in Congress?
  - How long has the Senator / Representative been in Congress?
  - When is he / she up for re-election?
  - What did the Senator / Representative do prior to first being elected to Congress?
    - All this information can usually be found by looking at your Senator / Representative’s website
  - How did the Senator / Representative score on the last few NAACP report cards?
    - This information can be found at [www.NAACP.org](http://www.NAACP.org) or by contacting the NAACP Washington Bureau

- Review the issue(s) you wish to discuss: limit the number of issues to no more than 3 per visit.

- Prepare a one-page summary of your position to leave with your Senator / Representative.
  - Include examples of the problem from the district / state if possible.

- Make a plan for your visit:
  - Chose a spokesperson for the introductions
  - Decide who will say what
  - Identify who will provide any follow-up information requested during the meeting

- Practice for the visit

More…
DURING YOUR VISIT

- Dress for success in business attire and be on time!

- Explain who you are, why you are there, and be certain to explain that you are a constituent (let them know what town / area you live in).
  - Have each person introduce him- or herself by sharing their name and where they are from. Also talk a little about the group you represent (how many members, frequency of meetings)

- Be clear, concise, compelling and credible. Remember that there is often a strict time limit to these meetings!

- Be polite yet firm in explaining your position; try to avoid direct criticism.

- Bring the message back to your issue if it goes off track.

- Use personal examples or examples that you know of from the Senators state / district if you can.

- Be clear about what you want the Senator / Representative to do.

- Record key points of the conversation as well as any questions that you can’t answer; promise to get back with a response within one week.

- Leave a summary of your position on the issue(s) you discussed.

FOLLOW UP ON YOUR VISIT

- Write a note to the Senator / Representative within 72 hours thank him / her for the visit and reiterating your conversation

- Send any answers to questions that were posed during the meeting as quickly as possible

- Be certain to talk among your group to ensure that you all have similar memories of the visit

- Continue to contact your Senator / Representative to maintain an open dialogue on the issue(s) that are important to you.
Name of Senator / Representative: _______________________________

Office location: ________________________________

____________________________

Date of visit: ___________ Time of Visit:__________ # of people attending ___

Facts about the Person you are visiting and the area he / she represents:
When first elected: ___________ When next up for reelection: _______
Hometown: ___________ Large cities in district: ________________
Committees ____________________________________________________
Issues member has focused on while in Congress: ________________
NAACP score in last Congress: ________________

People making the visit:

   Spokesperson: ________________________________

   Group note-taker: ________________________________

   Timekeeper (person charged with making sure nobody talks too long):

   ________________________________

Who will write the follow-up thank you note for the group? ________________
Who will ensure that any follow-up information is sent in a timely fashion?

   ________________________________

Issues to be discussed:
1.
2.
3.

Who will speak about what:

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DATE:______________

Senator or Representative:________________________________ State:

Office Visited: □ Washington, DC   □ District Office: _________________

Did you meet with the Senator / Representative personally or with a staff person?
□ Senator / Representative   □ Staff person: _______________________

Length of Time of meeting:___________________

Visit Conducted By:

Issues Discussed:

Did Member / staff person appear knowledgeable about the issues?______

Legislator's Position:

Rank on issue (circle):  1  2  3  4  5
(with us) (against us)

General Observations:

Who or what influences this member?

Follow-up needed in Washington:

Follow-up need at grassroots:

Is it worth visiting this Member of Congress / staff person again?

Signed:________________________________________________

(Please use the back if you need more space)
CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE VISIT REPORT FORM

DATE:______________

Senator or Representative:_____________________________ State:_____________________________

Office Visited: □ Washington, DC  □ District Office: __________________________

Did you meet with the Senator / Representative personally or with a staff person?  
□ Senator / Representative    □ Staff person: ________________________________

(city)

(name of staff person)

Length of Time of meeting:___________________

Visit Conducted By:______________________________

Issues Discussed:___________________________________________________________

Did Member / staff person appear knowledgeable about the issues?_____

Legislator's Position:

Rank on issue (circle): 1 2 3 4 5
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CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE VISIT REPORT FORM

DATE:__________________

Senator or Representative:________________________ State:

Office Visited: ☐ Washington, DC ☐ District Office: ____________________________ (city)

Did you meet with the Senator / Representative personally or with a staff person?
☐ Senator / Representative ☐ Staff person: ______________________________ (name of staff person)

Length of Time of meeting:________________________
Visit Conducted By:

Issues Discussed:

Did Member / staff person appear knowledgeable about the issues?_____
Legislator's Position:

Rank on issue (circle): 1 2 3 4 5
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Signed:________________________________________________
(Please use the back if you need more space)