



## The Basics for Making a Hill Visit

### Prior to Your Meetings:

- Develop a general understanding of the various virtual meeting platforms and their functionality. Download each and ensure that they work with your computer, webcam, and microphone. Coordinate a test meeting with your State Captain to verify. Plan accordingly to login to each meeting early. Allow at least 15 minutes between meetings for attendees to close out of one meeting, consolidate notes, and launch the next meeting.
- Take some time to learn the Key Issues and to think through your talking points.
- Prior to requesting a meeting, discuss with your State Captain and identify if one has already been requested. Remember, constituents are more likely to be offered a meeting. If a meeting has already been requested identify who the meeting POC is and let them know you are interested in attending. Ensure the following should the State Captain identify you as the POC:
  - Make your office appointments as long in advance as possible. You may need to be flexible with your appointment times.
  - Ask for the office's preferred virtual meeting platform.
  - Create a calendar invite, selecting the link to your meeting as the "Location" so that it is easy to use, but also include call-in data in the body of the invite.
  - Attach documents, including the 2021 Key Issues and state fact sheet to the invitation. Follow up with the documents in an email confirming they received the invite.
  - Be sure to coordinate all appointments with your team members, especially if you are designating team member(s) to help schedule meetings.
  - Send all meeting invitations to your Region's Deputy Director.
- Confirm your appointment a day in advance and be prepared for the office to ask if you can reschedule to another time.
- Research the lawmaker, their district, and their positions. Do they have a pilot's license or have they served in the U.S. Air Force? Have they co-sponsored the NASA Authorization Act or are supportive of STEM/workforce legislation? Are there any research universities, aerospace companies, third-tier suppliers, NASA centers, or major airports in their district?
- Review your state fact sheet and be prepared to discuss how aerospace contributes to the local and state economy.
- Dress for a business meeting. Though these meetings are all virtual, Capitol Hill is a professional environment and you are representing the Institute.
- Request permission to take a screen grab to document the event.
- 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 congressional office:
  - Chief of Staff: Runs the office and is the lawmaker's top advisor.
  - Legislative Director: Plans legislative initiatives and strategies; supervises other legislative staff.
  - Legislative Assistant: Specializes in specific issues, monitors bills and committee meetings in those areas; drafts floor statements and speeches.

- Legislative Correspondent: Receives and responds to all constituent communications.
- Scheduler: The gatekeeper for the office. They handle the member of Congress' schedule and, in some cases, the meeting schedule for the office.
- Professional Committee Staff: Serve either the majority or minority members of the committee.

#### During Your Meetings:

- Log in to the meeting 5 minutes early. More often than not, your meeting will start late because the staffer or member is running late.
- Pay full attention to the message delivery, turn your cell phones off (or on vibrate) and do not hold any private side conversations!
- Conduct your meeting in a neutral, distraction free area. Do your best to separate yourself from all external distractions.
- Your meeting will likely be no more than 15-20 minutes, so do not get sidetracked with chit-chat. Select one speaker to present the issue(s). Make sure the presentation is well thought out and prepared. When meeting with a member, you will likely only have a short amount of time to discuss the issues so have an elevator speech prepared.
- It is acceptable to thank a member for supporting a position in the past that is related to your meeting ("I am here to discuss H.R. 4 and wanted to thank the Congressman/Senator for signing on as a cosponsor").
- Mix facts with anecdotes. Hill offices appreciate 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.
- Be sure to let the member or staffer know that AIAA is always a resource for them. Do not be afraid to ask what we can do to get them more engaged in our issues and what information we can provide to assist their legislative efforts.
- Thank the member or staffer for their time and support!

#### After Your Meetings:

- Send a thank you email to the person with whom you met and provide any information you promised to provide.
- State Captains should provide AIAA with feedback on how the meetings went and if any follow-up is necessary.
- Keep in touch with the office, either on the issue with which you met them or on any new issues. You may want to visit the district office later in the year. Keep the relationship alive!