



## Congressional Visits Day 2022 Tips and Reminders

### Before CVD Week:

- Coordinate all meeting appointments with your State Captain
  - If the meeting has already been scheduled, determine who is the meeting POC (e.g., your State Captain, or someone delegated), and let them know you are interested in attending
  - Remember, constituents are more likely to be offered a meeting
  - Be persistent (it may take several calls or emails) and always follow up
- If the State Captain identifies you as the POC, ensure the following:
  - 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", but also include call-in data in the body of the invite
  - Attach appropriate reference documents to the invitation, including:
    - AIAA 2022 Key Issues
    - Your state fact sheet
  - 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-Public Policy.
- Plan your meetings accordingly
  - Plan for 15 minutes between meetings to allow attendees to close out of one meeting, consolidate notes, and launch the next meeting
  - Plan for no more than 5 team members per meeting, so the number is not overwhelming for the staffer/Representative/Senator
- Research the members of Congress whose offices you will be meeting with
  - Know their background – 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?
  - Know their districts – Are there any research universities, aerospace companies, third-tier suppliers, NASA centers, or major airports in their district?
  - Know their relevant caucuses and committee assignments
  - Know their stance on pertinent issues
- Review the Key Issues and be comfortable discussing them

### Week of Event:

- Identify a quiet area with a neutral background to attend your virtual meetings
- Determine which meeting platform(s) will be used for your meetings and familiarize yourself with the functionality
  - Download the platform(s) and create a login.
  - Ensure that it works with your computer, webcam, and microphone.
  - Coordinate a test meeting with your State Captain to verify.
- Confirm your appointment a day in advance and be prepared for the office/staffer to ask if you can reschedule to another time

- Review your state fact sheet and be prepared to discuss how aerospace contributes to the local and state economy
- Dress accordingly
  - Wear business formal attire
  - The meetings are virtual, but Capitol Hill is a professional environment, and you are representing the Institute
  - Participants need to be professional and conduct themselves as if in person
- Know with whom you are meeting. While it is great to meet with a member of Congress, you will often 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 the 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.
- Your meeting will likely be no more than 15-20 minutes, so do not get sidetracked with chit-chat. Aside from the executive summary about the health of the A&D industry, select 1 or 2 Key Issue items to discuss that are most relevant to the lawmaker.
  - It is not possible to cover all the issues and recommendations
  - Designate one or more speakers to present the issues; make sure the presentation is well thought out and prepared.
  - When meeting with a member of Congress, you will likely only have a short amount of time to discuss the issues so have an even-shorter elevator speech prepared
- Discuss AIAA's key issues, not YOUR company's, project's, or personal cause!
  - Refrain from expressing your own political views, personal views, or views about competing companies, agencies, programs
- 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")
- Present your advocacy in the most polished, professional way possible
- 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 lawmaker 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.
- Remain on mute if you are not speaking
- Pay full attention to the message delivery
  - Turn off cell phones and refrain from holding private side conversations
  - Remove yourself from all at home distractions
  - Remember that you are on camera!

- Be responsive to questions and have supporting information handy
- Take necessary notes or actions for follow up
- Thank the member or staffer for their time and support!
- At the end of the meeting, request permission to conduct a screen grab
  - State Captains should send photos to AIAA (email Steve Sidorek, [SteveS@aiaa.org](mailto:SteveS@aiaa.org)) for AIAA upload to share on social media sites
  - Tweet about your experiences (#AIAACVD)

After the Meetings:

- Send a thank you email to the staffer and/or member
- Provide any requested information in a timely manner
- Provide AIAA Staff feedback on your visits and the event itself via survey
- State Captains should fill out a CVD Meeting Report for each meeting via survey (link to be provided)
  - Record which office you met with
  - Record which issues were discussed
  - Record any comments or requested feedback coming from the meeting
- 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!