

# Tips and Advice For Your Congressional Visits

The following are some key points to remember to help you hold a successful congressional meeting:

## **Before**

- ✓ Schedule an appointment about 3 to 4 weeks out by contacting your legislator's district scheduler. Explain who you are and the purpose of your visit. Be prepared to fax a letter requesting a meeting. The letter should include the issues you wish to discuss and the number of people who will be attending the meeting.
- ✓ Try to keep the number of people attending to a maximum of 5.
- ✓ Visit the Congressman/Senator's website to check their position on the issues you want to discuss, as well as their committee assignments.

## **During**

- ✓ Arrive on time and be patient. A Member's time is limited and they may run late or your meeting may be interrupted.
- ✓ **Know your issues and explain your position from an agent's perspective.** Tell them how issues impact you, your business, and your employees. Bring material and examples supporting your position.
- ✓ Relate your personal story to how it will impact their district or state.
- ✓ Select a spokesperson for your group if there are several people in the meeting. This person will begin the discussion and outline the main points.
- ✓ Pay careful attention to the Member's verbal and nonverbal reactions to your presentation. Expect him/her to ask questions and be prepared to answer. Determine the Member's position on issue.
- ✓ Pick 2 issues that are most importance and avoid letting the discussion stray from the purpose for too long.

## **After**

- ✓ Follow up with a thank you email restating important points and include a link to our issue sheets.
- ✓ Follow up with PIA National staff to summarize the outcome of the meeting.

## **Advice**

- Don't assume the Member is knowledgeable about the issues.
- Don't argue with the Member. All you can do is make your pitch.
- Don't mislead or provide inaccurate information. If you cannot answer a question, ask if you can provide the Member with that information at a later time.
- Don't ignore the importance of a Member's staff or be disappointed if you meet with a staff member. They are the eyes and ears of the Member and usually have a good understanding of the issues.