

## Effective Visits with Your House or Senate Member

As Congress and the new Administration debate changes to our nation's Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid systems, engaged Americans are making sure their voices will be heard. This tip sheet suggests ways for you and your team members to do an effective visit with either your House or U.S Senate members. We start with the following principle: **Please try and set up meetings with your elected officials and, in those meetings, take along are voting members from that particular district.** Further, in most cases you will be meeting with a staff representative. That is OK, but **part of that meeting should include a request for a face to face with the elected member.**

### Your mission:

- First, your mission is to communicate our policy position on the key retirement security issues that Congress and the White House are reviewing and voting on. In fulfilling that mission you want to get detailed answers regarding the positions of the elected member you are visiting.
- But, there is an additional goal here: You want to show your elected representatives that many people from active organizations care about these issues.
  - We strongly recommend that you never go to such a meeting alone. Please take three to five other community leaders.
  - Your team will state the following:
    - 1) What organization he/she represents and HOW MANY MEMBERS belong to the organization.
    - 2) That you will be reporting back response to your members.
    - 3) That your organization wants to know when the member is holding a town hall or public meeting.

### How to arrange a meeting:

- Do a google or internet search for the member you are planning to visit. As you do, you will see addresses, e mail addresses, and phone numbers.
- Start the request with a phone call and in that phone call ask for the scheduling office or staffer. And, then, ask for a face to face with the elected official.
  - You will probably be asked for a written request. That is fine - do it either by snail mail or e mail.
  - And, then, follow up. If you are getting delays and dodges about a meeting, have your grassroots team start making calls as well.
- Finally, the office will want to know who is part of the delegation, their background, and the organization they represent. That is fine and you should provide it.

### Preparing for the meeting:

- Make sure you have sent your visiting team issue materials and key talking points.
- Either have a conference call or series of calls to prepare.
- Have your team meet together before the office visit.
  - Make sure your team is instructed to stay ON MESSAGE.
  - Have a lead spokesperson.
- Finally, the team should be willing to say who they represent and how many members are in their organizations.

**After the meeting:** Do a quick de-brief. Then, complete the reporting form and e mail it to [epowell@socialsecurityworks.org](mailto:epowell@socialsecurityworks.org).

**Don't forget:** They work for us. Welcome to Democracy, and, remember, you have power!

