

Guidance on Setting Up Meetings with Members of Congress In-District

There is perhaps no better opportunity to influence legislators on the public policy process than with an in-person meeting. Though not to downplay the impact of emails, letters and phone calls, etc., when our elected officials come face-to-face with an actual person / constituent / voter whom a certain policy affects, it completely refocuses their thinking.

During Congressional recess periods and at times when Congress is not in session, U.S. Senators and Representatives are hard at work meeting with constituents and groups back home to hear their views and discuss the issues of the day.

Remember that scores of other constituent groups are petitioning your legislator with their cause. It is important for NAHU members to identify a core group of agents and brokers from your district / state that are able and flexible to meet with your legislator when he or she is on Congressional recess (May 25 – June 1, 2009).

The Larger Your Group, the Better.

There is strength in numbers and in elected politics the more NAHU “bodies” in your meeting = more constituents = more voters. Ideally, a group of at least 10 of you can have a strong collective voice to increase your chances of a personal meeting and capturing the attention and desire to meet by your legislator. In the case of Senators, since they represent an entire state, a large group meeting is especially important.

Who is My Representative and/or Senator?

Search for your legislator’s in-district / in-state telephone number at www.house.gov or www.senate.gov, and call the office expressing your desire for a large “group” of state agents and brokers to meet with your Representative / Senator during the upcoming Memorial day recess to discuss your views and issues in national health reform. If you need help in identifying in-district office information, please let NAHU Government Relations staff know and we will be happy to help you.

Make Appointments NOW!!

Ideally, you would speak with an Appointment Secretary/Scheduler for the member. Since Representatives and Senators are very busy, prepare to be flexible and offer to meet on a date / time at some place where it’s convenient for your legislator. Offer to come in to their district office for a meeting, or you can arrange for a visit at one of your places of business. Expect such a meeting to last around 30 minutes.

We will be providing more guidance and talking points in the coming weeks to help you prepare, but it is important to start NOW identifying a core group of your colleagues and calling-up the Member’s office and saying “a group of 20 of us are interested in having a

short meeting” with the legislator during the Memorial Day recess. Schedules fill up quickly.

Discussion Topics

Core issues you’ll want to discuss are our commitment to playing a constructive role in upcoming health reform; our support for private insurance reforms, and our strong opposition to the creation of a government-run public insurance plan. For your reference, **here** is a list of our general talking points from the 2009 Capitol Conference.

We will provide you with some more policy and discussion materials in the coming weeks. In the meantime, please take some time to learn a little more about your legislator, their biographies, committee assignments, overall interests, etc.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact anyone in NAHU’s Government Relations staff:

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