



TIPS ON MEETING MEMBERS OF CONGRESS



The most effective means to emphasize your interest in issues affecting CAP is through a personal visit to a member of Congress. The following tips may help you as you prepare to meet with your congressional member.

- Make your appointment well in advance, state the subject to be discussed, the time needed and identify persons who will attend. Ask to speak to the “scheduler” on staff – that person is normally the best one to speak to for making appointments.
- Select a spokesperson if others are going with you and agree on your presentation.
- Have your wing information on hand. Let them know how your wing is serving their state. (Assets, members, missions, accomplishments, etc.)
- Arrive early and have one member check in. If there is not enough room in the waiting area, the rest should wait outside quietly.
- Meetings are usually short. Present the facts in an orderly, concise and positive manner.
- Relate the positive impact of legislation you support and any problems it may correct.
- Relate the negative impact of legislation you oppose, and suggest (where appropriate) a different approach.
- Leave wing fact sheets, if you have them.
- Encourage questions and discuss the issues.
- Ask for favorable consideration of CAP’s position or legislative issue. Thank the legislator for their time and leave promptly.
- Don’t be disappointed if you only get to speak with a staffer; they are just as important as speaking with your representative.

You can help shape the approach you will take with your congressional leader by knowing as much as you can about the legislator you plan to visit. You might want to refer to the Web sites at www.senate.gov and www.house.gov. They are both user friendly and will be great starting points to learn about your state politicians. If you believe you have something in common with the legislator, say so! Know his/her committee assignments, interests and background. Observe the office and what is on the walls. You may find something you have in common or a great opening comment.

If you have a cadet from your wing attending the Civic Leadership Academy, the staff will be “coaching” them on legislative advocacy and how to present themselves before a member of Congress or their staff. They will be a great asset for you so take them along during your visits to the Hill. If you are unable to meet with your representative in their D.C. office, make sure you make the effort to meet with them back in their home office in your state. Sometimes these meetings can be more productive and easier to arrange.

Please send your appointment info (Representative name, time, and location) to John Swain at 334-354-0825 dcoffice@capnhq.gov. This will enable him to get the appropriate leadership to the high interest meetings. For photographic support, please send your info to the NHQ photographer at srobertson@capnhq.gov.