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.