



Building Relationships on Capitol Hill

The personal relationships you have with members of Congress are hugely important. When legislators understand your business and have a connection to it and to you, they are more likely to stand up for broadcasters. Schedule meetings with leading candidates before Election Day and develop relationships with newly elected officials early. If a member is an incumbent and there is no established relationship, schedule a meeting today!

During election season, those running in open seats may qualify for NABPAC support after completing our candidate questionnaire. Contact jflemming@nab.org for a current questionnaire.

Develop the relationship:

- Build it before you need it.
- Make use of district work periods, which are also referred to as congressional recesses, when members are in their home states and districts.
- Utilize NAB's Speak Up website and Playbook at nab.org/SpeakUp for ideas on how to educate lawmakers on broadcasters' vital role in reaching their constituents (and voters), including talking points and social media tips.
- Get to know key staff – chief of staff, legislative director, scheduler and judiciary/telecom legislative assistants.
- Find and use congressional members' social media handles to post positive messages. Remember to tag the legislator in your post.
- Don't limit relationship development to legislators who represent districts where your stations are based. Consider also building relationships with members of Congress in other districts and states that your stations reach.

Ideas for in-district meetings:

- Set up a meet-and-greet with your legislators.
- Invite lawmakers into your members' stations for tours or interviews.
- Attend political events, which NABPAC is happy to help you navigate.

Hill Visits and How to Make Them Work for You

Scheduling the meetings/working through logistics:

- Offices want to meet with people from the communities they represent. Your personal stories are the most impactful thing you can bring to a Hill meeting. Request meetings as early as possible through the scheduler in the Washington, D.C., office for the member of Congress. On the email request, copy other staffers you may have relationships with in the office.
- Provide information on other attendees and issues to discuss in the request.
- Consider ways to make the meeting more compelling, like bringing local talent with you and sharing stories that directly impact the district.
- Aim for a member meeting, but don't decline staff substitutes – those relationships can be of equal or greater value.
- Keep in mind a staffer's concept of radio and television may be different than yours. They can be your best supporter in the office or your biggest obstacle.
- Most offices average 28 meetings per day – be patient and educate as well as advocate. A legislative aide today may be tomorrow's senator or representative.
- NAB's lobbying and state association teams are here to help provide contacts and guidance.
- If scheduling multiple meetings, allow for adequate time for travel and getting through security.

Preparation for the meetings:

- Tailor your ask to your office and connect the dots between what you care about and what your legislator cares about. Research how you can personally connect your issue with the member.
- Consider leave-behind materials that incorporate member and/or district-specific information.
 - » NAB provides leave-behinds for the annual State Leadership Conference and issue briefs on priority issues at nab.org.
- Determine roles for meeting attendees – assign topics, order of speaking, etc.
- Confirm locations and meeting times one day prior.

During the meetings:

- Begin with the end in mind – what outcome are you seeking?
- Set the stage.
- Paint the picture – engage your audience.
- Describe the challenges ahead.
- Include surprise an interesting element or humor – keep them listening.
- Describe how their help could really matter to broadcasters and make a big difference.
- Always finish with the ask.

Follow-ups:

- Follow ups are essential and will put you ahead – set a reminder to circle back after your meeting.
- Members of Congress appreciate positive messages via social media like Twitter, Instagram or Facebook.
 - » Tag the member of Congress.
 - » Thank them for being helpful to broadcasters on a certain issue or hosting broadcasters for a meeting.
- Send a thank you note to the staff and/or member.
- Don't forget to share information with NAB's lobbying and state association teams.