How to Have an Effective Lobby Visit

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Overview

We will be discussing:
- Your role as a constituent with staff
- The importance of faith, values, and storytelling
- Lobby Visit Order and Pro Tips
- Follow Up
The Most Influential Communications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advocacy Strategy</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-Person Issue Visits from Constituents</td>
<td>94%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact from Constituents’ Reps</td>
<td>94%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individualized Email Messages</td>
<td>92%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individualized Postal Letters</td>
<td>88%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Editorial Referencing Issue Pending</td>
<td>87%</td>
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<td>Comments During Telephone Town Hall</td>
<td>87%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone Calls</td>
<td>84%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter to the Editor Referencing Your Boss</td>
<td>84%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visit From a Lobbyist</td>
<td>83%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formal Email Messages</td>
<td>56%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(n = 190-192)

Source: Congressional Management Foundation 2015 survey of congressional staff, including Chiefs of Staff, Communications Directors, Legislative Directors, and Legislative Assistants.
The Hill Visit

An Ambassador for NETWORK and a Local Voice

- Your participation in NETWORK’s Virtual Lobby Days on the Hill is helping build organizational clout with Senators
- You are sharing NETWORK’s works on Sentencing Reform and Criminal Legal Systems
- You are sharing why you, the constituents, care about this issue
- You are representing your community
Background on Hill Staff

- Specialize in a few issues
- Often author legislation
- Are policy strategists
- Often are not from the home district or even the state

*Need to learn why the legislation is important to you and your community!*
The 3 “4 P’s” Analysis

- Policy
- Prayer
- Politics
- Process
Personalized and Local Information

Advocates are more influential and contribute to better public policy when they provide personalized and local information to Congress.

How helpful is it for messages from constituents to include the following?

- Information about the impact the bill would have on the district or state: 91% (Very Helpful/Helpful) - 9% (Very Frequent/Frequent)
- Constituent’s reasons for supporting/opposing the bill or issue: 90% (Very Helpful/Helpful) - 50% (Very Frequent/Frequent)
- Specific request or “ask”: 88% (Very Helpful/Helpful) - 59% (Very Frequent/Frequent)
- Personal story related to the bill or issue: 79% (Very Helpful/Helpful) - 18% (Very Frequent/Frequent)

(n = 198-207)
Source: Congressional Management Foundation 2015 survey of congressional staff, including Chiefs of Staff, Communications Directors, Legislative Directors, and Legislative Assistants.

Disconnect between what is wanted and received
Using your faith as the basis for your visit should be considered a strength.
Not every member of your lobby teams need to be of the same faith, or even of any faith at all.
Be authentic.
You are able to talk about the real impact of policies from your lived experiences.

This perspective is new and vital to the Senator’s office.

While a member or the staff may be able to argue about data, they cannot dispute experiences.
Preparing to Lobby

- Think about why you are in the room. Why is Sentencing Reform important to you? Why is passing these four pieces of legislation important to you?
- Research your Member of Congress. Why might they want to support these pieces of legislation?
- Review NETWORK’s leave behind and talking points
- If you’re in a group, assign roles for during the visit
- Practice your talking points and prepare for a conversation
- Check your technology, internet connection, etc. to make sure that you’re set for the visit
COVID-era Lobby Tips

We will be discussing:

- Zoom visits allow greater accessibility for constituents
- Introduce constituent’s names, locations and organizations into the chat and do a round robin of names at the start
- You can pack the Zoom room to show support but only assign 3-4 speakers
- Don’t miss the chance to answer “How are you handling the pandemic?” within a policy context.
Before the Meeting Begins

- Meet with your entire team before the scheduled meeting to review roles
- Make sure that you can see your leave behind and talking points
- Silence all distractions (Close email, Skype, social media, etc.)
- If you’re on Zoom, rename yourself so that the staff person can see your name and organization
- Ask the staffer how much time they have at the start of the meeting!
Lobby Meeting Order

- **Brief** Introduction
- Let Staff/Member know if you are a Constituent
- Thanks (say something positive about Member – requires research)
- Introduce the issues you are lobbying on
  - Include faith/moral component
  - Include racial equity framework
- Listen carefully for the Member’s position
Lobby Meeting Order

Make the policy asks
- Will you support the EQUAL Act (S. 79) by:
  • Signing on as a co-sponsor (if they haven’t already)
  • Inviting colleagues to become co-sponsors
  • Calling for the bill to be voted out of Judiciary Committee
  • Urging fellow Senators to support passage of the bill
Lobby Meeting Order

☀ Make the policy asks
- Will you support the First Step Implementation Act (S. 1014), the Prohibiting Punishment of Acquitted Conduct Act (S. 601), and COVID-19 Safe Detention Act (S. 312) by:
  • Signing on as a co-sponsor (if they haven’t already)
  • Inviting colleagues to become co-sponsors
  • Urging fellow Senators to support passage of the bill
During Your Meeting

**BE SURE TO ASK:**

- For the staff member(s) email address
- How you can support the Member of Congress
- When the Member of Congress will be hosting a town hall or have in-district recess
- Is there anything the staff member needs (besides NETWORK materials) for follow-up?
Tips About Tone

- Avoid direct antagonism in your criticism
- Be polite, yet firm, when explaining your position and proposed solution
- Don’t be afraid to say “I don’t know” or “I can get back to you”
- Make sure your “ask” is clear and concise
After Your Meeting

- Debrief with your group—what went well? What did we hear? We did we learn?
- Send a thank-you email to the staffers within 24 hours of the meeting with leave behinds attached
- Include the policy ask and any information you promised to send
- Share your photo on social media—or send to NETWORK to share—and tag the Member of Congress
- Fill out NETWORK’s Lobby Report Back Form
Questions?

Thank you!