



2024 Hill Meeting Day: DOs and DON'Ts

Before the meeting, DO:

- Confer with your group and assign roles for each meeting. Make sure you know who is taking the lead, who is going to talk about which issue, and that you are all on the same page. You will have a chance to do this at the Pre-Hill Briefing on April 17th.
- Arrive early. You have to go through a metal detector and security check to get into the House and Senate Office buildings, and sometimes the lines can be long.

During the meeting, DO:

- Introduce yourself and make clear how your work affects the Member's constituents.
- Offer yourself as a resource. Invite the staff or Member to visit when they are in the area.
- Be flexible. Schedules on the Hill are always changing. Your meeting may be pushed back or cut short, you may have to meet in a hallway, or you may have to walk and talk. This isn't a reflection of how important you are to the office – it's just the reality of the schedule on Capitol Hill.
- Stick to the script. We have chosen our legislative priorities carefully and you will be most effective if everyone is unified. Don't raise other issues or share additional material.
- Leave your business card. Thank the Member and staff for their time.

During the meeting, DON'T:

- Be disappointed if you are meeting with staff instead of a Senator or Congressman. Staff are the decisionmakers, and their bosses will look to them for recommendations.
- Assume the person you are meeting with knows anything about the legislation or will recognize it by bill number.
- Multitask during the meeting. That includes looking at your phone, checking email, sending a text, or taking a phone call.
- Talk over each other or talk over the Member or staffer.
- Make things up. If you don't know the answer to a question, say, "I don't know, but let me get back to you."
- Talk about politics or other polarizing issues. Avoid talking about campaigns, elections, political contributions, your past political support of the Senator or Congressman, your opinion of the President, or other similar topics.

Other Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How do I get the meeting started?

A: Introduce yourself to the legislator or their staff members. Thank them for the time and tell them who you are, what you do, and where you live or work. Then you can say, “I’m here today to talk to you about....” and launch right into your talking points.

Q: Will I have a hard copy leave-behind packet for each office?

A: No. Most Hill staffers nowadays prefer electronic documents rather than paper copies. The Requests to Congress will be emailed to the staff ahead of time, and your participant packet includes cards with a QR code the staffers can scan with their phone or other device to access electronic versions of the Requests.

Q: What if there is a disagreement over an issue?

A: If the Member or staffer disagrees with you, respond politely, but do not become overly argumentative. Ask if there is additional information that would help them understand your position. Always try to end the conversation on a positive note, even if you have to agree to disagree.

Q: If I am running late for a scheduled meeting, what should I do?

A: If you know you are going to be more than a few minutes late, contact the office directly to let them know. The phone number for each office is on your meeting itinerary.

Q: If one of my congressional leaders says that he/she will support one of the bills, what should I do?

A: Please contact Kim at Kim.Krenik@naemt.org and let her know.

Q: Do I have to go through security at every office building?

A: The House offices are connected to each other underground, so you can travel between the House office buildings without going back through security. The Senate office buildings are also connected to each other underground, so you can travel between Senate office buildings without going back through security. However, if you have to go from the House to the Senate or vice versa, you will have to go outside and go through security again.

Q: Will I have a chance to eat? And where should I eat?

A: You can bring small items in your purse or bag, or there are vending machines in all the office buildings. If you have time between meetings, you can visit the following eateries (but be ready for long lines and big crowds especially around lunchtime):

- On the House side: Rayburn café (B-357) or Longworth café (B-223)
- On the Senate side: Dirksen/Hart Senate Chef (ground level) or Dirksen Cafeteria (basement level)

Other questions? Contact the EMSHD help desk at EMSontheHill@wswdc.com or 202-589-0800.