

Keeping in Touch after a Day on the Hill

Following a day on the hill, it is a good idea to stay in touch with the members you met with, especially if you are a constituent. Members meet with new people almost constantly, so don't worry if they don't remember you right away or even remember you at all. Below are some recommendations to help keep these connections fresh.

Thank you Note

The first step is to write a quick, hand written thank you note. This note should include a short message thanking the member for their time during your day on the hill, as well as reiterating who you are and which organization you are from. If there is a specific issue that you discussed, you could remind them of that as well.

Email

Email is the easiest way to connect with a member. As session progresses and you notice something the member does or says that helps your organization, reach out to them and thank them. This doesn't need to be long, in fact, the shorter the better. Legislators are busy people and do not have time to read a detailed two page email. They greatly appreciate short communications that get to the point quickly. Have additional information to back up what you are saying in case they respond with questions.

This type of communication also shows the member that you are engaged in your issue and paying attention to committee hearings and floor sessions. They will appreciate the work that you are putting in on your end by being an informed citizen.

When Session Ends

Congratulate the member on a session well done, and wish them a good summer. If the member specifically helped your cause during session, or voted in your favor, thank them for that. Members receive a lot of negative feedback. A positive note thanking them for their efforts will stand out. If possible, a hand written note is best.

If applicable, you could invite the member to come tour your facility over the interim. You will want to follow up with an email to the member and their assistant if you intend to invite them to something.

Other Tips

It is a good idea to offer yourself as a resource to the member, and remind them of your contact information with each communication. If they feel that you are a good source of information, they may reach out to you someday if they need your expertise.

It is likely that your member will not always act in a way you agree with, or in a way that is in favor of your organization. Tread lightly and make thoughtful decisions if you choose to communicate with the member after they do something that is not helpful to you or your organization. Even after all of the hard work you put into building the relationship, it could quickly become tarnished and it could get set back permanently.

Don't forget that you are representing your organization as a whole when you are communicating with a member, even if that is not your intent.