



nine**b** group

2017 CONSERVATION CONFERENCE
09.27.17



ADVOCACY IN DC-BIG PICTURE

- Advocacy is simply telling Congress what is important to you!
- Someone is always advocating, if you aren't someone else is winning
- Relationships matter more than people think, often time its not the better idea or campaign contributions, but its trust and relationships that win the day.
- Rural and farm representation in Congress is low, but some give credit for Trump's victory to rural America



TYPES OF MEETING/OFFICES

- District Office
- DC Personal Office
- Committee Office



HOW TO SETUP A MEETING

- Contact the Members Office and ask to speak to the scheduler to schedule a meeting. A phone call is the best way to start this process.
- Things to Remember:
 - To meet with the Member you will most likely need to have someone from the District/State with your group, don't expect to meet with Senator Cochran if you are from Alabama



HOW TO SETUP A MEETING

- Things to Remember:
 - Schedule as far in advance as possible; a Members day is filled with Caucus meetings, hearings, briefings, fundraising, etc. If you want in, get in the request early and be flexible with times
 - Don't try to schedule more than 6-8 meetings in day, backups can happen and that could throw off your entire day. Leave some time between meetings.



HOW TO SETUP A MEETING

- Things to Remember:
 - Try to schedule meetings together on the House side and then the Senate side
 - Being 15 minutes early is just as bad as being 15 minutes late
 - Hugely important, even if you ask for a meeting with the Member, you could end up meeting with staff, don't be let down, these meetings can be just as important or more.



HOW TO SETUP A MEETING

- Things to Remember:
 - When you do meet with staff, they will most likely be young, like 22-25 year old young. Treat them with respect and like you are meeting with the Member. These young people move up and one day could have very influential jobs.



OBJECTIVES FOR THE MEETING

- **Establish rapport/friendliness.** If they like you, they'll want to help you and will be more likely to take additional meetings. This is the number one objective establish a relationship. These can sometimes last years and go from office to office.



OBJECTIVES FOR THE MEETING

- **Educate** them about the issues. Even if you are meeting with a very ag-centric or conservation-centric office does not mean the staffer has a background in the subject.
- Example- My list of issues in Rep. Everett's office was agriculture, foreign affairs including the U.N., banking and financial services, taxes, 2nd Amendment Rights, something called "notch babies" and social security



OBJECTIVES FOR THE MEETING

- **Make a “Defined Ask.”** Such as, “We’d like to ask Sen. Cochran to support increased technical assistance through conservation operations in the FY2018 appropriations bills; or
- We’d like Senator Cochran to sign onto this letter supporting \$150 million for Watershed Operations funding



OBJECTIVES FOR THE MEETING

- **Engage-** Bring up projects in the district/state. Ask them next time they are in the District or State if they'd like to come see some of the great work you are doing. Don't have a meeting, just to have a meeting.



TIPS FOR THE MEETING

- **Small talk.** This often begins while walking with the staffer from the waiting room to a conference room. “How’s your day going?” “Is this a busy time of year for your office?” “I appreciate you taking the time to meet with me.” “Hot as hell, here, its nice and cool in the district”. Don’t be intimidated, this is just a conversation.



TIPS FOR THE MEETING

- Prepare beforehand- One person should be designated to introduce who you are, the participants in the group and why you are there.
- Designate others to participate, don't be the meeting where one or two people talk and the other 4 don't say a word



TIPS FOR THE MEETING

- Give districts/state examples of success; for example if you have a successful RCPP project bring/pictures examples.
- Don't bring 10 things to talk about, focus focus focus. Even if your packet, has ten subjects try and focus on just a couple



TIPS FOR THE MEETING

- Try to keep meetings to 30-45 minutes in length
- Try to stay engaged, don't fall asleep, yawn out loud, talk about wanting to be in the bar, or ask how long this will last (these all have happened)



COMMITTEE STAFF MEETINGS

- You don't have to be from the state of the Chairman
- When scheduling, ask for the person handling the issue area for the Committee and call or email that person directly.
- Be prepared to talk in depth, these are the experts.



CONCLUSION

- Be yourself and build relationships
- Educate and have an ask
- Bring personal examples, bring the abstract to reality
- Have fun!