

## PERSONAL VISITS WITH LAWMAKERS



Personal visits with lawmakers are very important to developing relationships that will help you address existing issue and those that will develop in the future. Federal and state legislators usually have times when they or their staff members can meet with you at their offices either in their districts or at the capitol. Members of Congress may be more accessible away from the distractions of Capitol Hill but don't hesitate to request a meeting with them at their offices in Washington, D.C.

## SCHEDULING A MEETING

A lawmaker's appointment secretary usually sets up meetings with constituents. If you find your elected official is not available for a meeting, ask if you can schedule an appointment with the staff person who deals with your issue. Staff members play an important role in analyzing issues and lawmakers rely heavily on them for information—don't discount the importance of building relationship with staff.

State regulators usually have to be met in the state capitol. Regional offices for federal agencies are located in each state or multistate area.

Have your own or a GCSAA position paper or information sheet ready. Prepare a "talking paper" or list of the issues you want to discuss. Gather some information about your golf course to share.

### THE MEETING

- Introduce yourself and your golf facility. Tell them you are a constituent and let them know your professional affiliations (for example, that you are a member of GCSAA and your local chapter).
- Give a brief description of your chapter or organization and GCSAA.
- Identify the issue that concerns you. Briefly and succinctly describe how you think it will affect you, your facility and GCSAA.
- Ask if you can answer any questions. If you do not know the answer to a question, say so and offer to get back to them with the answer. You can also say that you will ask someone on the GCSAA staff to provide them with the information they need.
- Ask their opinion on the issue and take careful note of the response you receive.
- Ask who on the staff will serve as a contact for future communications. If in Washington, D.C., ask about district or regional offices and who would serve as a contact there.
- Leave written information about the issue, your facility and GCSAA.
- Be sensitive to the busy schedules of lawmakers and their staffs. Plan on most meetings lasting no more than 15 to 30 minutes.

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### AFTER THE MEETING

Follow-up is crucial! At the first opportunity, write a personal thank-you note. Briefly restate your position and enclose additional information as appropriate. Remind them that you and GCSAA are available to assist them in any way.

Government affairs staff can help you put together a lawmaker leave behind. Government affairs staff can provide you with information on the issues and other materials such as data from the Golf Course Environmental Profile and information on the golf course management profession. You can further customize your leave behinds with your own chapter publications and information on your golf facility.

