

PROVEN TIPS

FOR PROTESTING AT YOUR MEMBER'S OFFICE

Congress is in recess (again), and there is no better time to make your voice heard on the issues you feel passionate about. But before you start making signs and driving down the road, look at these proven tips compiled by ex-congressional staffers to ensure your in person advocacy is as effective as possible.

DO	DON'T
• Be kind and courteous to the Member's staff as they are there to serve the member and their district. We are sure they will be happy to pass along your thoughts, concerns, or written correspondence on the issue at hand to the Member for consideration. • Be upfront and honest with the Member's Office regarding the topics/issues you want to discuss and who they will be meeting with. It is important for there to be trust between the two parties and if you are lying or dishonest about the reason you're meeting with them, the meeting and any future communication with the office will be ceased immediately - and for good reason. • Contact the local press beforehand to let them know about your protest and ask if they will cover your in-person advocacy. This gives you the opportunity to tell them about your issue, too, and why you feel it is so important that you want to protest at your Member's office.	• If you are going to protest at your Member's office, make sure to show up with more than 3 or 4 people. A protest of so few people will not help your cause or further the issue/policy you wish to discuss, and those outside of the protest will not see you or your group as serious, only hurting your cause in the long run. • Do not bring posters with "funny" or "clever" phrases or sayings to your protest. This will not help your cause or issue in the sights of the Member's office and your advocacy and concerns will not be taken seriously by staff. Further, it will not be taken seriously by the press, and you want the press to highlight your advocacy and important issues, and not highlight a "funny" sign. • Be firm, but stay effective. You're there to make your voice heard, so be direct, be persistent, and don't be afraid to ask tough questions. But remember: the goal is to advance your cause, not just win an argument. Personal attacks, dismissive body language, or shouting can quickly become the story and distract from the issue you came to advocate for. You can strongly disagree with your Member, challenge their position, and hold them accountable while still treating the Member and their staff with respect.