Tips for Meeting with Your Legislators

**DO**

- *Introduce Yourself*
  Remember to tell the legislator or staff member who you are, where you are from, what you do, and that you are a member of the AIA. Do not assume they have this information.

- *Be Flexible, Be Polite*
  Members of Congress have very busy schedules that change constantly. It is important to stay flexible and understand that you may have to meet with staff, your meeting may be cut short or interrupted, or that you may be meeting with someone who may disagree. Always maintain flexibility and be polite, regardless of your personal opinion.

- *Ask for Something*
  Remember to make specific asks on the AIA’s bills and key issues. When in doubt what those issues are, contact the AIA National staff at govaffs@aia.org.

- *Make it Personal*
  You are the expert on the design industry, and you should utilize this opportunity to educate your elected officials about the needs and concerns of the industry. Legislators want to know how a specific issue will affect their district, so use personal or local experiences to emphasize your points. Members of Congress relate most to issues that have a direct impact on the constituents they represent.

- *Set the Expectation for Future Interaction*
  Invite the representative to take part in future in-district activities in the district (component meeting, site visit, etc.). Let the legislator know that this is the first of (hopefully) many future interactions.

- *Say ‘Thank You’*
  We are always asking our legislators for something, so thank them for their hard work and ask what you can do for them.

- *Follow Up*
  Take the time after your meeting to let AIA National staff know how your meeting went.
and if they should follow up with the legislator’s office. And send your legislator a thank you note reviewing the issues you discussed. Click here for a sample.

• **Have Fun**
  This is not only a great opportunity for you, but it’s a great opportunity for legislators and staff to hear from their constituents. Enjoy it!

**DON’T**

• **Feel Slighted**
  You may have to meet with staff or only have three minutes to talk in a crowded hallway. Remember, every opportunity to communicate with legislators and their staff is a great opportunity to show our commitment to our profession and to our issues. Take advantage of it.

• **Feel Like You Need to Know Everything**
  If someone asks a question, and you don’t know the answer, offer to have AIA staff follow up with the requested information. Don’t make answers up or feel like you are expected to be an expert on legislative issues.

• **Miss the Opportunity**
  Don’t just say “hi” or read from the talking points. Share your story – that is the one the legislator wants to hear.

• **Talk About Money**
  Keep fundraising and campaign conversations separate. Have those conversations back in the district outside of a member’s office.