

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

Be prepared – You never know when you might run into a Senator or Representative in person. You can always be ready for your moment with a one-minute talk or “elevator speech” that includes the key take away.

Be concise and use everyday language as much as possible when communicating with your legislators and/or their staff. Know your facts and key points and stick to them.

Be friendly and straightforward, but avoid being political. Agreeing/disagreeing with the politics of a Member of Congress should not negatively affect the mission to educate them on the importance of the issue.

Tailor your message to the Member of Congress/staff person if you are visiting multiple members in Washington, DC. How does the issue relate to them and their district/constituents?

If you are visiting on Capitol Hill, keep in mind that meeting with congressional staff and not the Member of Congress is the norm. The staff do most of the work of keeping the Member informed.

Be flexible re meeting space, which is often cramped or non-existent in Congressional offices.

Be respectful to Members of Congress and the staff and always thank them for their time no matter where you happen to meet with them.

Stay in touch, as needed, to keep updated information flowing. Email and phone are best. Regular mail involves long delays.

At Home: Invite Members and/or staff to events as a guest or speaker. When possible, attend local events/parades/conferences, etc. where Member is speaking, presiding, etc. and introduce yourself.

A Word About Congressional Committees – The primary crafting of federal legislation is done in the committees and subcommittees with jurisdiction over particular issues and funding. There are many steps along the legislative process after the original drafting where changes can be made. For ASHS, the primary committees that work on issues of importance at the House and Senate Agriculture Committees and the House and Senate Appropriations Committees and Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee. You can see which members are the various committees by clicking links below.

U.S. House of Representatives Committee Directory: <https://www.house.gov/committees>

U.S. Senate Committee Directory: <https://www.senate.gov/committees/index.htm>