

Suggestions for Meeting With Your Elected Official

IIA members are encouraged to meet with their congressional representatives at least once per year. Establishing a solid relationship with your representative is a good way to help advance The IIA's advocacy agenda and improve congressional decision-making on issues that affect the internal audit profession. Here are some helpful hints to make your meeting successful:

- Call ahead of time for an appointment, either in the district or Washington, D.C. office.
- Be sure to advise The IIA's Advocacy Department (Advocacy@theiia.org) of your appointment in advance so we can provide materials to help you prepare.
- Don't feel intimidated by the legislator. Most likely, you are more of an expert on your subject than the legislator. Be confident.
- Be personable. Begin your meeting by complimenting the representative on legislation he/she has written or supported. This will set a pleasant tone for the rest of your meeting.
- Be knowledgeable of your subject and organization in your presentation. Show that you are a credible authority on your topic and keep your message concise. Remember to emphasize how the issue affects you.
- Be open to questions. Be an active listener and answer the representative's questions with accurate facts. If you're unsure about an answer, offer to look into the matter and call him/her back.
- Don't allow the legislator to divert from a subject matter. If he/she attempts to evade your question, tactfully ask for an answer and how the representative plans to vote on the issue.
- Have perseverance when your legislator seems unsupportive. Respond to any hostility by providing arguments to opponent's questions. (This may require you to do some additional research before your meeting. The IIA's Advocacy Department can provide assistance.)
- Emphasize that the legislator's constituency supports what you are advocating. The fact that an issue is important to his/her constituents most likely will prompt the representative to make your goals part of his/her agenda.
- Ask for a commitment. Find out exactly how the representative will further your cause. However, do not press for a commitment if your legislator is clearly opposed to your views.
- Be willing to meet with a staff person if the legislator is unavailable. A staffer is able to inform the representative of your views and relay your concerns.

For more information, contact The IIA's Advocacy Department at Advocacy@theiia.org.