



HILL VISIT FOLLOW-UP



Developing and maintaining good relationships with congressional staff is the most effective way to have your voice heard in Washington. Your visits with policymakers during the National Policy Seminar lay an important foundation to build these relationships, but continuous follow-up activity is critical. Please be sure to take the following steps after you return home.

- **Post pictures of your visits online and promote your advocacy to the media.**
 - Don't forget a screenshot with your Member of Congress or their staff—you're participating in the democratic process! We strongly encourage all Hill Day participants to post their pictures on social media using the hashtag #npscte21
 - TIP: Tag your Members of Congress in your post and thank them for their time (and/or their staff's time) and commitment to CTE. Many will retweet and repost messages from constituents.

- **Write thank you notes.**

Following up after your meetings with Senate and House offices is a critical next step in forming a good, working relationship with your Members of Congress and their staff. It is helpful to reiterate key points or include electronic versions of meeting materials in thank you notes for later reference. It is best to email thank you notes.

You will find three sample letters, created for various purposes. The first [sample letter](#) is designed to send directly to your Member of Congress if you met with them, the [second](#) is also to send to the Member of Congress, but only if they did NOT attend your meeting. The [third](#) is a letter you would send to the congressional staff that you met with. We encourage you to personalize them with issues that are important to you and with specific facts about your local situation. We suggest that you send a thank you letter promptly—within a day or two of the meeting.

- **Follow up with any information that you promised at the meeting.**

Quick follow-up info may be included in a thank you note, other questions may take longer to answer and should be saved for a later message. Be sure to send any follow-up information requested as soon as possible while the issues are still fresh in the staff person's mind.

CONTINUING THE RELATIONSHIP

There are many opportunities throughout the year to connect with your Members of Congress. Now that you have a staff contact in an office, you can communicate directly with that staff member on key issues. ACTE will alert you through our Legislative Alert system to opportune times to connect with policymakers on specific legislative issues, such as when bills or amendments are scheduled for votes or when key committee hearings will be held.

In addition to making contact on specific legislation or policy issues, also take time to engage in education and relationship-building activities to ensure your policymakers have a strong understanding of today's CTE. Set a goal to engage with your elected officials at least once a month, either with their Washington office or with local staff back home. Activities may include:

- Share positive anecdotes about your program and your students, such as information about awards, community service projects and other student success stories.
- If an article appears in your local press about your program, send it to your Members' offices along with a short note explaining the connection to federal policy.
- Make sure to pass along any positive research or data reports related to your program.
- Attend community events or town hall meetings sponsored by policymakers to share about CTE and its link to economic development or other critical issues.
- Make sure to show your appreciation for positive actions taken by policymakers.
- Perhaps most importantly, invite policymakers to see your programs! You can plan a formal school tour around their attendance, or invite them to participate in already scheduled activities, such as awards banquets or CTSO competitions.

ACTE's ADVOCACY RESOURCES

In order to make your follow-up activities most effective, familiarize yourself with the advocacy resources available on ACTE's website and how you can stay up-to-date on information related to federal legislative initiatives affecting CTE.

ACTE strives to provide our members with accurate and timely information impacting the CTE community that will allow you to be effective advocates. The Public Policy Department is always happy to answer any questions you may have. Legislative information may also be found through the following ACTE resources:

- [CTE Policy Watch Blog](#)
- ACTE Legislative Alerts
- ACTE News
- ACTE Advocacy Web page
- Advocacy workshops and training at conferences
- Techniques Magazine

Advocacy Toolkit

ACTE's advocacy toolkit can be found at: www.acteonline.org/advocacy/advocacy-resources. There, you can find tools to help in your advocacy efforts. Sections include:

- Building Relationships with Policymakers
- Visiting Policymakers
- Calling Policymakers
- Corresponding with Policymakers
- Hosting a Site Visit for Policymakers
- Testifying Before Policymakers
- Social Media Advocacy
- Targeting the Media
- Building Community Support