

Setting Up a Congressional Visit

TIPS FROM THE DPS ON SETTING UP A CONGRESSIONAL VISIT

When visiting Washington, the DPS encourages you to contact at least three people's offices: your two Senators, and the representative in your voting district. If you work in a different district than you vote in, then they recommend that you contact that person's office as well.

The most effective way to set up a Congressional visit is by sending an email to the staffer in charge of scheduling. The email can be obtained either via the web page for your Congressional representative, or by calling the main office and getting right to the point of wanting to schedule a meeting for reason X. Below is a sample "template" that you might find useful.

The key is to be succinct and to tell them why you want to meet and when you are available. Don't forget to tell them that you are a constituent, and play up the "local angle" to your visit. Some of them call back within a few days, others email back. Some never reply at all. If you don't get a reply within 2-3 days, follow up with a phone call to the office, mentioning that you emailed the scheduler already but have not heard back. Most of the time this will get you in the door.

The DPS maintains a one page (double-sided) handout with talking points on current issues designed for Congressional visits that you can consider printing out and leaving with the representative or staffer that you visit. See the DPS FRS [Communicating with Congress](#) [1] page for the most recent copy of this handout.

----- SAMPLE TEMPLATE -----

To: Scheduler for Sen. Charles Schumer
Fax: 202-228-3027

From: Prof. Jim Bell, Cornell University
Re: Meeting request for Thursday May 17

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a constituent living in the town of Lansing, and I am also an astronomy professor at Cornell University in Ithaca. I will be in D.C. on Thursday May 17 with a group from the American Astronomical Society's Division for Planetary Sciences, meeting with a number of members of Congress and their staffers to discuss recent issues related to science, NASA, and the future of the U.S. space program.

I would like to request a short meeting, if possible, with either Sen. Schumer or one of his staffers, to discuss these issues as well as to provide an update on the role that folks here at Cornell in Ithaca and the surrounding region are playing in the space program. Previously I have had very productive meetings with Ms. Heather Langdon on the Senator's staff, discussing many of these same issues.

My schedule is free until about 2:00 p.m. on May 17, and so I am willing to be flexible in scheduling a meeting any time before then. I could also accommodate a meeting after 3:30 p.m. on May 16.

Please let me know if there is any other information that you require. My office phone number is 607-255-5911 and my email is

Thank you!
Sincerely,

etc. etc.

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