



## Preparing for the Hill & Your Member Meeting

One of the most effective ways to influence the policy making process and make a lasting connection with your legislator is to visit him or her in person. Most legislators have regular office hours during which they and their staff are available to their constituents. Scheduling a meeting in advance (4-6 weeks if possible) is ALWAYS recommended.

### What to Expect: Tips from the Experts

Here are tips to keep in mind when conducting a meeting with your policymaker:

- **Arrive on time.** If meeting with a staff member, be sure you have the correct contact name. Never underestimate the power of the staff person in helping to shape the policymaker's opinion and position on an issue.
- **Bring two or three colleagues with you.** Prior to the meeting, agree on what points will be made and which one each of you will discuss. Meetings usually last 15-20 minutes, allowing you enough time to address two or three issues.
- **Deliver your message in a concise, polite, and professional way.** Be sure to introduce yourself and your colleagues. Explain why you are concerned about the issue.
- **Be prepared.** Bring information and other materials that support your position to leave behind. Also, be prepared to answer questions. When asked what you want, clearly explain your needs.
- **Follow up.** Send a thank you letter that outlines the different points covered during the meeting. (A sample thank you is included at the end of this section.)

### Hill Visits Do's and Don'ts

#### Do:

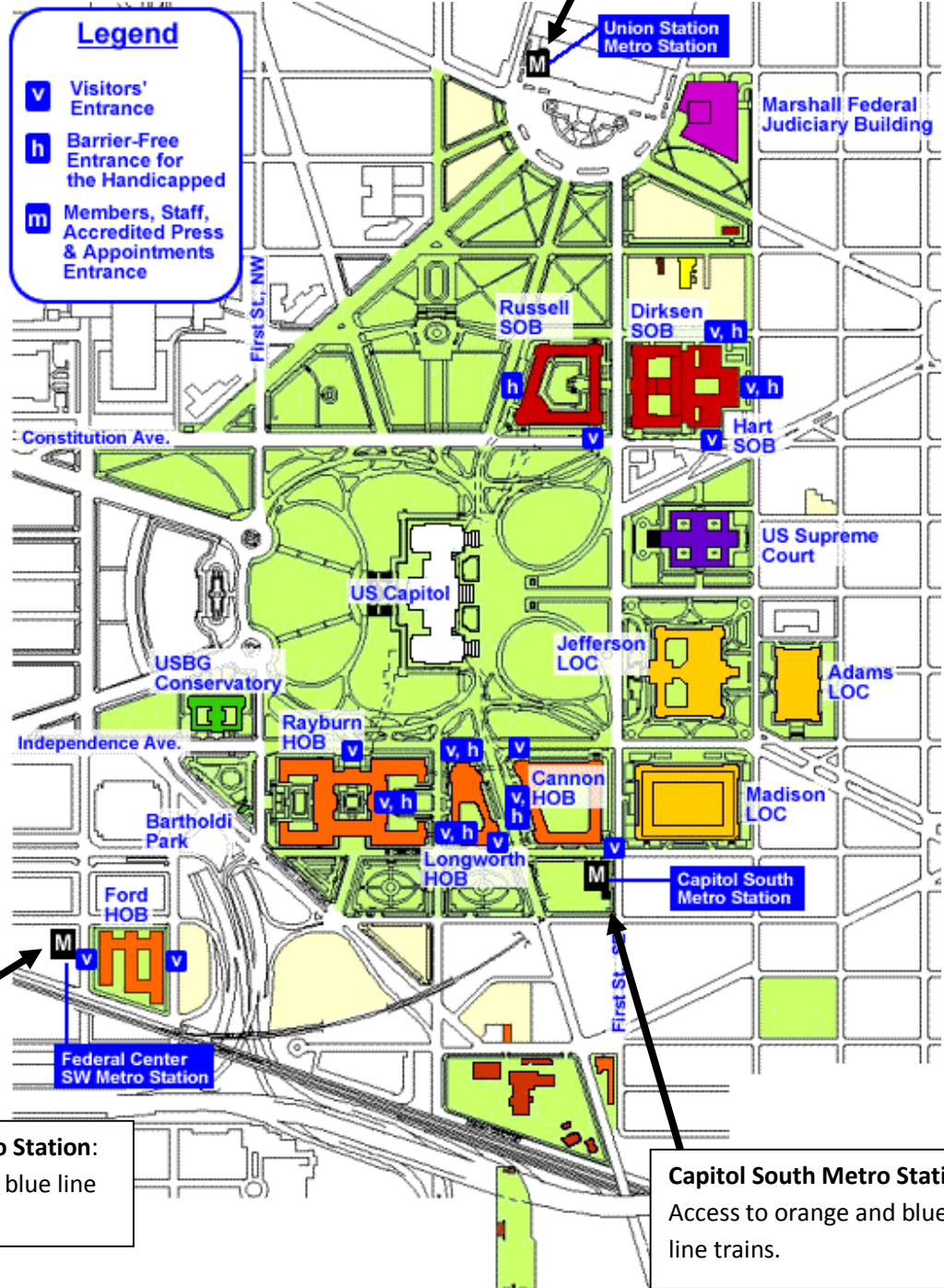
- Learn your member's committee assignments and where their specialties lie.
- Present the need for what you're asking the member to do.
- Explain why your point matters to your state or district.
- Ask your member's position on your issue and why.
- Spend time developing relationships with Congressional staff.
- Thank your member and staff for past votes he or she made that you support. (See *How They Voted Guide* included in your registration bag.)

#### Don't:

- Overload a Congressional visit with too many issues (aim for two or three at most).
- Expect members to be knowledgeable on every issue.
- Be afraid to take a stand on an issue. They want to hear what you have to say.
- Be offended if, due to scheduling conflicts, your legislator requests that you meet with his or her staff. (Staff are often more important in shaping policy decisions!)

# Capitol Hill

**Union Station Metro Station:**  
Access to red line trains.



**Federal Center Metro Station:**  
Access to orange and blue line trains.

**Capitol South Metro Station:**  
Access to orange and blue line trains.