



## Yearly Advocacy Strategy

### December / January: Legislator Research

Use what is traditionally Congressional “downtime” to learn more about the legislators you’ll be approaching – and ask others to do so as well. Knowing such things as their policy interests will put you ahead of most players in the advocacy game.

### February: Follow the Money

At most levels of government, February marks the beginning of the whirlwind season of the budget process. This is a great time to keep track of what’s going on in the appropriations and budget committees.

### March: Honing Your Message with the Message Formula

It’s early spring which means it’s that time of year again – time to connect with legislators and their staff. As you prepare to meet with legislators, think about your message. You can build a message that will resonate by using the message formula below:

- Hello, my name is [\_\_\_\_\_] and I’m from [\_\_\_\_(*golf course / town*)\_\_\_\_\_].
- I am here to talk to you about [\_\_\_\_(*policy/relationship ask*)\_\_\_\_\_].
- Knowing of your interest in [\_\_\_\_(*xyz policy / committee*)\_\_\_\_\_] we think you’ll be interested as well.
- This is important to me, my colleagues, and co-workers because [\_\_\_\_(*insert personal story*)\_\_\_\_\_].
- That’s why we really hope you’ll [\_\_\_\_(*make the ask to support/oppose an issue*)\_\_\_\_\_].
- I’d like to follow-up by [\_\_\_\_(*follow up ideas / have you out to the course for a visit*)\_\_\_\_\_].
- Can I get contact information for the appropriate staffer in your local office?

### Mid-April / May: Memorial Day Town Halls

Legislators will be home setting up town hall meetings during the Memorial Day work period, which happens right around Memorial Day every year. Now is a great time to find out when these meetings will take place and make plans to attend. Plan to stop by a little before or stay after the event to get some face-time and speak directly with the Congressional member or staffer.

### June / July: Planning Site Visits

Start setting up site visits for the August district work period, which starts at the beginning of August and lasts about a month. Showing a legislator, or staffer, your golf facility helps them understand how what you’re asking for connects to the real live people they represent. It’s always better to **show** lawmakers things, not just **tell** them.

### **September: Election Connections (During Election Years)**

Elections are just around the corner, and now's the time to start connecting with candidates. It's important to identify those individuals who may bring an understanding of your issues to the policy process.

### **October: Build Coalitions**

Coalitions can make or break your cause. Can you connect with support groups, community groups, non-profits or others to add impact to your message? When considering coalitions, ask yourself: who might serve as good coalition partners, either because they support our cause OR because they have good relationships with our target audience? Who should approach them?

### **November: Build Relationships with Staff**

In many cases, getting to know staff people can move your issue forward even faster than getting to know the policymaker. It might be hard to believe, but it is true. Many policy staff make their way to the district or state during November and December. Now's the time to ask how you can connect with them at home!

### **Year-round: Media Messaging**

Radio? TV? Internet? Newspapers? Each venue can help you get the word out, but each wants different things. Radio wants sound bites, television wants pictures, newspapers want stories and the internet all of the above. Find your "hook" both in terms of hot topics and reporters' needs and you'll be on your way to free publicity in no time.

### **Year-round: Social Media Outreach**

Social media is here to stay and can be an incredibly useful tool for effective advocacy. "Like" your legislators on Facebook (you don't have to actually "like" them). Find mutual connections on Linked-In. Follow them on Twitter. All these steps will give you new insights in to their interests and actions.