



## 119th Congress Advocacy Guide

Delivering a clear, concise pitch on what tax-exempt municipal bonds mean for your community is key to effective advocacy. Below are some useful guidelines and talking points to consider when engaging in advocacy with your members of Congress or their respective staff.

### Setting Up Your Meeting

Information on who your members of Congress are and how to contact them is available at <https://www.congress.gov/members/find-your-member>

- Start with Scheduler: Direct your initial outreach to the office's scheduler, **explain you are a constituent**, and request a meeting with the legislator. The scheduler may redirect you to staff or indicate that they need to wait until closer to the meeting date to confirm the legislator's availability.
- Pivot toward Staff: If you do not hear back from the scheduler or if they refer you to office staff, redirect your outreach and confirm a meeting time and location with the assigned staffer. **If you do not know which staffer to contact, start with the Legislative Director.**
- Be Patient: Schedulers sometimes do not finalize details of a meeting until close to the meeting date (sometimes within 24 hours). If possible, try to **confirm a meeting with a staffer while the scheduler tries to secure a meeting time with the member of Congress.**

You can request to meet with your member of Congress and/or their staff in Washington when Congress is in session, or you can request to have a meeting at their district office while Congress is on recess. A tentative schedule for the first session of the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress (2025) is [available here](#).

## Preparing for Your Meeting

Familiarize yourself with NABL's talking points listed below and our general policy platform, [available here](#). Our talking points serve as a high-level guide. You should also come prepared with one or more specific stories about bond-funded projects within the district and how the tax-exemption made the project a financial reality.

Before you attend your meetings, consider the following:

- Dress: The dress code for Hill meetings is business attire. You will likely walk quite a bit if you have multiple meetings scheduled, so wear comfortable shoes. Bring business cards and any personal items (computers, phones, chargers, etc.) to use during any downtime.
- Security: The U.S. Capitol Complex is a secure facility. When entering a building from the outside, you will go through "TSA Precheck"-style security, including passing through magnetometers and screening your personal belongings through an x-ray scanner.
  - o Additional know before you go considerations, including a list of items prohibited within the U.S. Capitol Complex, is [available here](#).
  - o A map of the U.S. Capitol Complex is [available here](#).
- Learn About Your Legislators: Take a moment to get a sense of your member of Congress' prior experience, political stances, and general background information. Also note their committee assignments to gauge their level of focus and expertise on specific issue areas. You can find this information on the member's website or use [Ballotpedia](#) for a quicker search.

## Day of Your Meetings

- Starting Your Meetings: **If you are in a group, always designate and confirm who will open the meeting before walking into the office.** In general, it makes sense for the person in a group who is the most connected to the office or district to begin the meeting with welcomes and introductions. Lead with why you are visiting and continue to specific discussion points.

- Flow of Your Meetings: Reference the [Advocacy Primer](#) for specific discussion points on NABL policy. Feel free to deviate as the conversations progress naturally. **While explaining the importance of tax-exempt priorities and our policy issues, humanize and relate the topic back to your district and state.** Provide specific examples when appropriate and possible.
- Avoid the Weeds: Legislators and their staff hold daily meetings on every policy topic imaginable. Do your best to gauge the legislators' / staff's prior knowledge of the topic. If they seem well versed, feel free to progress more rapidly and go into deeper detail. **If they seem new to certain topics, make sure they understand the issue at hand before progressing.** Allow legislators and their staff to ask questions, and you may offer to follow up on anything after the meeting concludes. **It is okay if you do not make it through all the points.**
- Concluding Your Meeting: End meetings by reiterating that NABL and our members are a resource to the office. Indicate that our DC-based staff is always reachable to the office. Confirm follow-up deliverables, if any. Finally, thank the members of Congress and their staff for their time. You can also offer [advocacy@nabl.org](mailto:advocacy@nabl.org) as a resource for congressional staff to email if needed.
- Expect Last Minute Changes! The Hill is a fast-paced place. Schedules and logistics shift dramatically with little notice. **Make sure to check your email and phone for updates from offices or schedule change requests, particularly if a member of Congress is scheduled to attend the meeting.** Meetings may also abruptly need to change locations, including meeting a member of Congress in the U.S. Capitol Building. Defer to your best judgement on what changes you and your group can accommodate and remain aware of travel times between buildings. Ask congressional staff for their opinions if you are unsure. If you are running late or need to cancel a meeting with staff, be sure to provide as much notice as possible.

## After Your Meetings

While we will only be on the Hill for one day, advocacy is a constant job. Here are some ways you can build on any momentum after a meeting.

- Report Back: Please report back on any outcomes or needed follow-up with NABL staff. We encourage you to complete a report back survey through our Advocacy Center, [available here](#). Feel free to pass anything urgent directly to NABL staff by emailing [advocacy@nabl.org](mailto:advocacy@nabl.org).
- Follow-Up: Members of Congress or their staff may request follow-up information, including answers to questions you cannot answer on the spot or to further discuss an item. Be sure to promptly follow up with any requests and cc [advocacy@nabl.org](mailto:advocacy@nabl.org) if helpful.
- Meet in District: Finally, don't make this meeting your last with your officials and their staff. Feel free to engage with them back home by scheduling meetings with the district office or attending town halls and other public events.