

# ASA's Congressional Visit PROGRAM

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of the industry

a strong legacy



advocacy to advance the channel

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AMERICAN SUPPLY ASSOCIATION



# make a difference plan your **congressional visit** today

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the **ASA Congressional Visit Program** is to expose U.S. Representatives and U.S. Senators to the unique nature of the PHCP/PVF industry and the role ASA members play in delivering products and services. Educating our elected Federal officials on our \$69 billion industry, the impact legislation and regulatory efforts have on our businesses and the jobs that we support is a vital function of your national association. The **ASA Congressional Visit Program** puts a face on our industry, and connect the laws that our elected leaders debate with their impact on the jobs and livelihood of 75,000 industry professionals. Each ASA member can play an important role in delivering this education and message.

## GETTING STARTED

The first step is to send a formal letter to your U.S. Representative and/or Senators, inviting them for a visit and tour of your facility. Once your letter has been mailed/e-mailed, it is a great idea to follow up your invite with a personal call to confirm that the request was received. Keep in mind that Congressmen and Senators receive hundreds of invitations on a monthly basis; it may take time to get a confirmation letter accepting or declining your invitation. It is most helpful to be flexible in your dates for the visit. When Congress is in session, it is difficult for any visits to take place during the week. Mondays and Fridays are sometimes acceptable. Saturdays are generally good days, or suggesting dates when the Congress is in recess is often preferable.

### *Tips to Include in Your Letter*

- >> **Respectfully invite your Congressman or Senator – never demand.**
- >> **State how much time you would need for the visit.**
- >> **Offer the opportunity to talk with all of your employees, and tell them how many people they will be addressing. Elected officials are always looking to talk to a lot of people – they are votes!**
- >> **Never offer a campaign contribution as an inducement to speak, although be prepared to get an invitation to a fundraiser after the visit. If you support that elected official, definitely consider making a political contribution through the ASA PAC (call us to find out how).**
- >> **Remember to be flexible with the proposed dates. Suggest dates and be sure to reiterate that you can accommodate others.**



## PREPARING FOR THE VISIT

**Obtain an issues update from ASA.** It is important to talk to the elected representatives visiting your company about the most pertinent issues being debated before Congress. You should also inform the elected representative of the issues that you are most concerned with before they arrive.

**Share the issues and why they are important to your company** (and why you are facilitating the visit) with your employees beforehand. It will be very impressive if your employees are aware of the issues when they have

“**DEVELOPING A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR ELECTED LEADERS CAN HAVE AN IMMEASURABLE IMPACT ON FUTURE LEGISLATION THAT IMPACTS YOUR COMPANY AND YOUR INDUSTRY. AND DEVELOPING A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP BEGINS WITH INVITING YOUR CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES TO VISIT YOUR OPERATION.**”

**Pat O'Connor  
Kent & O'Connor, Washington, D.C.**



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a chance to speak with the elected representative.

**Take pictures.** You do not need a professional; a well trained employee that is an amateur photographer would do just fine. Take pictures and share them with ASA, as well as with local press.

**Have a well-lit and clean room for the elected representative to meet and address your employees.** Have several questions (relating to the key issues) available for your staff to ask.

**Plan to have a welcoming committee.** Designate several people to greet the elected representative when he or she arrives. If you have signs, it is encouraged to extend a welcome on company signs.

**Prepare several questions and ask key employees (in advance of the visit) to volunteer to ask the elected representative the question if the elected representative accepts questions.**

## CONDUCTING THE VISIT

Have the welcoming committee greet the elected representative. Don't keep the elected representative waiting in the lobby.

Start out in a conference room or board room setting. Conduct brief introductions and explain what you have planned for the elected representative. Give a brief overview of the industry and your company (ASA can assist with general industry overview).

Review just several of the issues that you have identified as important. While ASA has dozens of issues that we address, you can give him or her written position papers on all issues that the elected representative can take with him or her for reference. *(Just as a reminder, during your brief tour, you will have time to subtly discuss issues and how they impact your business.)*

Conduct a brief tour. It is suggested that the tour be no more than ten minutes in length.

While the elected representative is touring your facility, have someone assemble the employees to meet with the elected representative.

Once the tour is complete, give the elected representative the opportunity to address all of your employees. Ask if he would like to take a few questions from the audience. Well-informed and engaged employees can be very impressive in presenting the issues to the elected representative and will make a significant impact on how the elected representative thinks about the impact of legislation.

Once the elected representative has concluded his or her remarks, thank him or her for coming for the visit and ask about future opportunities to discuss issues.

“**HAVING OUR CONGRESSMAN VISIT OUR OPERATION AND MEET WITH OUR EMPLOYEES WAS NOT ONLY EXTREMELY EXCITING FOR OUR EMPLOYEES BUT HIGHLY EDUCATIONAL FOR OUR REPRESENTATIVE. WE PLAN TO DO IT AGAIN.**”

**Jeff New**  
**Mid-City Supply, Elkhart, IN**



## AFTER THE VISIT

As a follow-up, you can send a written thank you letter along with several photos of the event (photos of the elected representative meeting with the employees works best). Often times, elected officials put photos of their visits on their official Congressional websites. Don't forget to contact ASA and report on your successful visit.

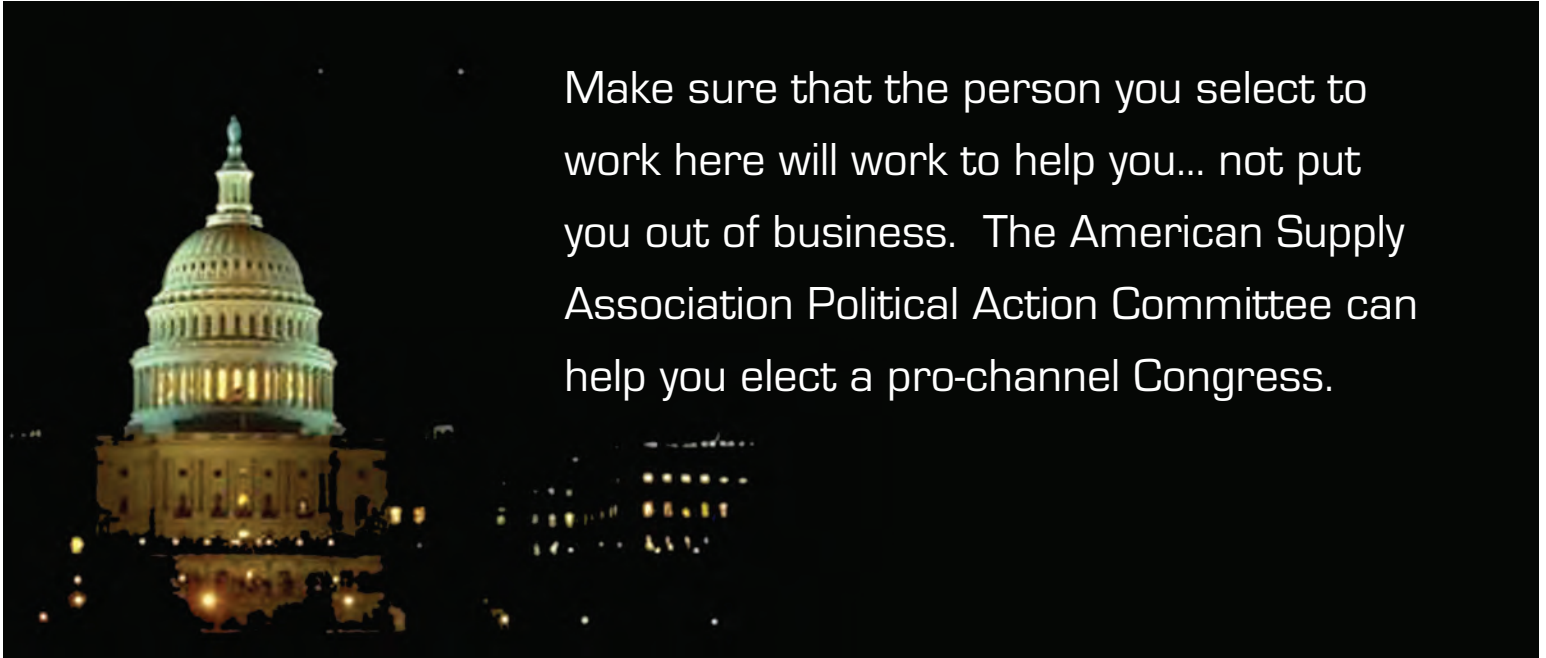
You may receive a solicitation to a campaign fundraiser for the elected official.

It is encouraged for you to participate, especially attend. It's a great opportunity to reinforce your visit, the issues, and future support from the elected official.

Lastly, consider attending **ASA's Legislative Fly-In** which offers you another opportunity to meet your representative in his or her Washington office and solidify your relationship.

strengthen the channel  
schedule a **congressional visit** today

The people that work in this building can impact your business faster than all of your competitors combined.



Make sure that the person you select to work here will work to help you... not put you out of business. The American Supply Association Political Action Committee can help you elect a pro-channel Congress.

For information on how you can support the ASA PAC, call us today at 312.464.0090 or visit the ASA website at [www.asa.net](http://www.asa.net) [and click on the Advocacy link.]



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