# Capitol Visits: What To Do And Not Do

## The DO’S

- Be professional, courteous, positive, direct, clear, concise, factual, credible, and specific.
- Do your homework.
- Always follow up with information you have promised.
- Follow up a visit or telephone call to a legislator with an offer to be of assistance in the future.
- Use correct forms of address.
- Follow the KISS rule: Keep fact sheets, letters, and testimony short. Be sure to include how you can be reached on all fact sheets and letters.
- Stay in contact with your legislator—it is the key to establishing a relationship of mutual trust.
- Treat members of the legislature as friends, and intelligent citizens.
- Attend legislative hearings, committee meetings, budget mark-up sessions, and floor votes on your issues, if appropriate.
- Always, always be truthful.
- Be reasonable, and realize that everyone thinks their issue is the most important one being considered.
- Thank legislators for meeting with you and for their consideration, even if your comments are not well received.
- Treat members of the legislature as you would like to be treated. Use common sense.

## The DON'TS

- Don't give inaccurate information or purposely lie.
- Don't be rude to a legislator and/or his/her aide.
- Don't make moral judgments based on a vote or an issue.
- Don't waste a legislator's or aide's time.
- Don't send a form letter.
- Don't fail to find out where a bill you are being asked about is in the legislative process.
- Don't publicly or privately complain about a legislator or a member of his/her staff. Never start or carry rumors.
- Don't hold grudges.
- Don't be argumentative or abrasive.
- Don't interrupt him/her when he/she is obviously busy.
- Don't cover more than one subject, if at all possible, during a visit unless asked.
- Don't write a letter longer than one page, if possible.
- Don't blame legislators for all the things that go wrong in government.
- Don't be offended if he/she forgets your name or who you are, even if it is just five minutes after your visit.