

## **Tips for a Successful Congressional Meeting**

### **Purpose:**

Be a resource, educate staff and Members about how higher education is critical to the success of special education and how the twin shortages of special education teachers and special education faculty need to be addressed by the federal government.

### **Dos**

1. Say thank you!
2. Do your homework: know what committees the legislator sits on, etc.
3. Respect their time: be on time, prepared and flexible
4. Stay on message: be clear and concise
5. Secure support for your issue: make it clear that you are asking that the Higher Education Act be reauthorized and include provisions from last year's bills that address special education, particularly the faculty shortage
6. Include a local story: provide facts, figures and anecdotes
7. Build a relationship with staff: become a resource
8. Leave information behind
9. Follow up: send a thank you letter immediately after the meeting

### **Don'ts**

1. Be late
2. Show disappointment if your meeting turns out to be with a staff person instead of a Member
3. Assume staffers know all about special education and the role of higher education
4. Get off message – it's easy to “play the name game” or discuss the weather and lose valuable meeting time
5. Use threats
6. Forget to leave information behind
7. Forget to follow up or write a thank you letter

Have Fun and Good Luck!