



## **Telling Your Personal Story**

As you prepare to meet with your legislators, an important part of your meetings is to “tell your personal story.” As design professionals, you are well equipped to demonstrate how landscape architecture projects and the policies that impact them provide important benefits to the community. Incorporating the tips provided below coupled with issue talking points can help you develop a persuasive narrative to ensure that your legislative priorities are not only conveyed but remembered, too.

### **Tell Your Legislator About You**

*Do you live or work in the congressional district?*

Communicate whether you live or work in the congressional district, which is important because it helps to establish a connection between you and the legislator and his/her staff.

*Are you an employer in the congressional district?*

If you are an employer in the congressional district, how many people do you employ? This too, will help to establish a connection between you and the legislator and his/her staff. As an employer, you also provide important services to the district, including economic development, local jobs, revenue, and community development services.

### **Know the Problem AND Suggest a Solution**

*What is the problem facing your community and how will legislation address it?*

Discuss the problem that is facing the community, state, or country. Research the facts and data that demonstrate the problem. Discuss how the legislation will address the problem or other issues in your community.

*Are you part of the solution?*

Emphasize how landscape architecture is able to correct the problem and can address other community issues, too. Let the legislator know that you are available as a resource to help with issues in the congressional district and across the state.

### **Discuss Your Work**

*What projects are you and your colleagues working on?*

Bring images of projects that relate to the legislative issues you are discussing. Before and after images of projects can be very persuasive. Bring newspaper clippings or printouts of online articles that evidence the positive impact of the work of landscape architects in the district.

*What projects are needed in your district?*

Landscape architects design and collaborate on a wide variety of projects integral to local, state, and national development. Be prepared to describe projects in which landscape architects and the programs that support the profession play a pivotal role in improving the economic, structural, and environmental improvements in the community.

### **Making “The Ask”**

*Do you have a clear and specific ask for your legislators?*

Now that you have explained who you are, what you do, and some of the issues impacting your community, it’s time to focus on “The Ask.” The Ask is one of the most important parts of your meeting. The Ask should be clear, concise, and specific, e.g. *Please support H.R. 123, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Improvement Act.*

If the meeting ends without an ‘Ask’ from you, the legislator and staff have little incentive to pursue the topic you discussed. The Ask also gives you a reason to follow-up with the staffer at a later date - a way to stay in touch with the office and continue to build a relationship.