


Government Isn't Broken: How to Work the System and Beat the Odds

An Advocacy 101 Presentation for the
League of American Bicyclists
Presenter: Stephanie Vance





Is Government Broken?

- Number of bills introduced in a Congressional session
- Percentage of bills that pass
- Number of bills related to the renaming of post offices and federal buildings
- Number of bills containing the phrase “Bicycling”
- Average time for a meeting with an elected official

Getting Legislators to Listen: Five Elements of Effective Meetings



1. **Logistics, logistics, logistics**
2. **Make the Ask**
3. **Know Your Audience**
4. **Tell a Compelling Story**
5. **Coordinate Your Message**

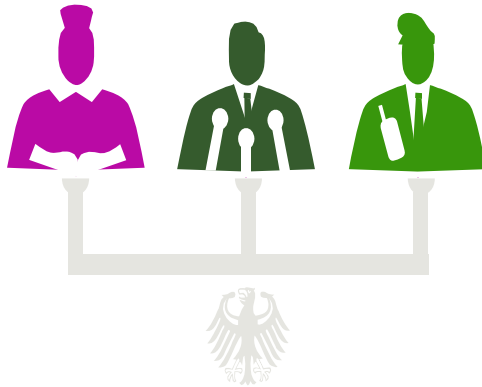
Element #1: Logistics, logistics, logistics

- The Capitol Hill layout
- Security: If you've been through an airport, the hill is a breeze
- Wear comfortable shoes
- Individual offices: why they feel like a warzone!
- Be flexible
- When in doubt, ask a cop! (But don't throw your cell phone at them 😊)

Element #2: Make the Ask



Element #3: Know Your Audience



- Why are you relevant to the elected official you're talking to?
- What does the elected official care about?
- Good things to know about your legislator
- Framing Your Message

Element #3: Know Your Audience -- Working with Staff



- Remember, Your Issue Is One of Many
- Staff Contact Has Advantages Over Member Contact
- Institutional Memory in an Elected Official's Office Can Be Short
- Understand Their Communication Style
- Expect (and Appreciate) Youth

Element #4: Tell a Compelling Story

- Why are you here? Why are you an advocate?
- How have you come to be involved in biking?
- How has biking benefited you personally?
- How does biking benefit your community?
- What challenges are you facing? What benefits of biking aren't being fully realized?
- How can the Congressional office help resolve those challenges?

Element #5: Coordinating Your Message for Maximum Impact

- Who is the constituent?
- Does anyone have a personal relationship?
- Who has the best story on which issue?
- How will you coordinate the various issues and asks?
- Who feels most comfortable speaking?
- Remember the five minute rule!

The most important thing to remember?

On the day of your meeting, you are one of the most important people the Congressman or staff will see! You're a real, live constituent, and nothing beats that...

Contact Information

Advocacy Associates

1640 19th St., NW

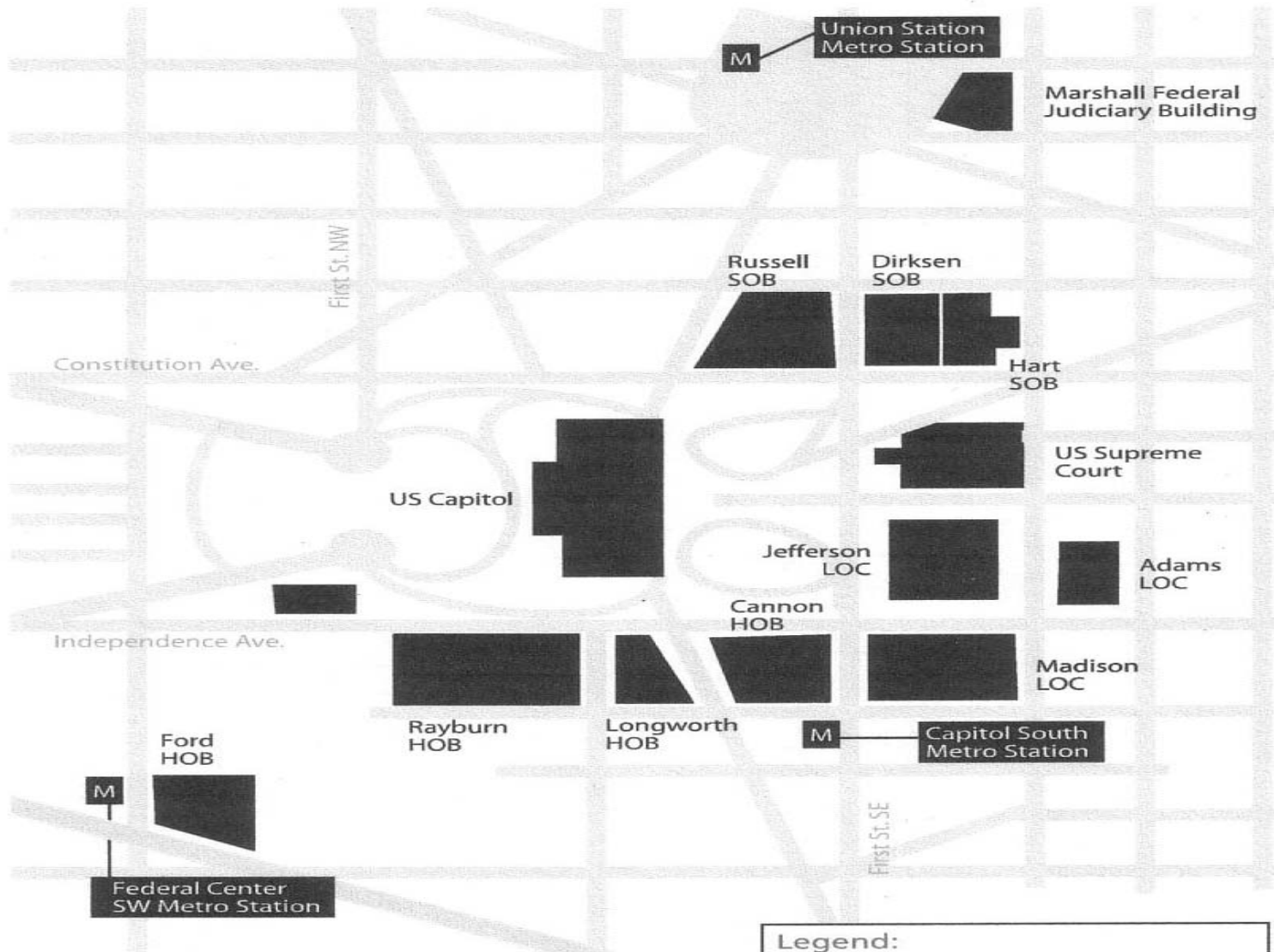
2nd Floor

Washington, DC 20036

(202) 244-4866

www.advocacyguru.com

Vance@advocacyguru.com



Legend:
HOB: House Office Building
LOC: Library of Congress Building
SOB: Senate Office Building