



## **Making the Most Out of a Capitol Hill Visit to Office of a Member of Congress**

Like most things in life, preparation is key to a successful visit to an office of a Member of Congress.

Unlike most things in life, a visit to an office of a Member of Congress is not hard, and is often a pleasant surprise for anyone who has never done it before.

(Keep in mind, Members of Congress are “people” persons. It is the nature of their profession. Therefore, the 10 to 15 staff persons who work for a Member of Congress tend to be similar – pleasant, smiling, and genuinely nice. They are all experts at meeting constituents and hearing the constituents make a case for the constituent’s favorite cause.)

Following is a “how to” kit to having a successful “Hill” visit.

After the “how to” is a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document.

## Step One: Congressional DC Visit

1. Call the office of your Congressperson and/or Senators. (If you do not know the number of your Congressperson and Senators, you have two options. Call the Capitol telephone operator at 202-224-3121, and ask for by name your Congressperson and/or Senators. You will be put through immediately. Or if you wish to dial direct, go to [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov), go to box labeled “Representatives’ Websites (A-Z Last Name), pull down to the name you want, “click”, and then click “go”. At the website will be a telephone number direct to the office. (If you do not know the name of your Congressperson, go to [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) and under “Find Your Representative” type in your zip code plus 4 digit location and click “go”. Finding the direct number of a Senator involves a similar process. Go to [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov), and click the pull down menu for a list of Senators.) (Note: The same conversation applies to calling a *Senator’s* office. Throughout this kit, “Senator” can be substituted for “Representative”.

Your conversation will proceed generally as follows:

**“Caller (i.e. You):”**

**Person Answering Phone:** “Hello, Office of Representative [Name], may I help you?”

**Caller:** “Yes, I am [Name], and I work at [Name of Company] and on May 6<sup>th</sup> [or 7<sup>th</sup>] I will be in Washington, DC for the Annual Conference of The ESOP Association, which is the association for employee-owned companies. I would like to see Representative [Name] when in DC. May I speak to the person who handles Representative [Name]’s schedule?”

**Person Answering Phone:** “That is [\_\_\_\_\_] and I will put you through.”

Chances are high you will receive voice mail asking you to leave a message.

### **Suggested Message to Leave in Scheduler’s Voice Mail:**

“My name is [\_\_\_\_\_] and I work at [Name of Company], located at [\_\_\_\_\_]. On May 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup>, I will [or several of us] will be in Washington, DC for the Annual Conference of The ESOP Association, which represents employee-owned companies. [Name of Company] is employee-owned through an ESOP. I called to ask if it is possible to have a brief courtesy visit with Representative [Name]. My telephone number is [\_\_\_\_\_]. Thank you, and I look forward to hearing from you.”

If you talk to the scheduler in person immediately, or if the scheduler calls back per the voice mail, here is possible exchange:

**Scheduler:** “Hello this is [\_\_\_\_\_] and I handle Representative [Name]’s schedule. May I help you?”

**Caller:** [Basically repeat what was suggested in possible voice mail, except add] “ESOPs are arrangements heavily governed by Federal tax law and labor law; so we always want

the Representative [Name] to be aware of developments before Congress that may impact the employee owners of [Name of Company].”

**Scheduler:** “Okay, how about \_\_\_\_\_ [A.M.] [P.M.] on May 6<sup>th</sup> or [7<sup>th</sup>] if you asked for the 7<sup>th</sup>.”

**Caller:** “That would fine. I look forward to our visit.” [Repeat the day and time]. OR

**Scheduler:** I’m sorry, Representative [Name] has no time open on May 5<sup>th</sup> [6<sup>th</sup>]. Could you come by May [7<sup>th</sup>], [4<sup>th</sup>], etc.?” **Caller:** “Yes, I can. What time on May [\_\_\_\_\_]?”

**Scheduler:** [Gives a time].

**Caller:** Thank you, and I [we] look forward to being in your office May [\_\_\_\_\_] at [\_\_\_\_\_] [A.M] or [P.M.] OR

**Scheduler:** I am sorry, Representative [Name] has no time open on any days the week of May 4<sup>th</sup>. Would you like to see his/her staff aide who works on issues related to tax law? **Caller:** “Yes, that would be fine.”

**Scheduler:** “That is [\_\_\_\_\_] and [She may transfer you to the person referenced.] OR

[She may suggest you call that person directly, which will lead to the same voice mail scenario, and callback outlined above. A staffer may question you about “why” do you wish to see him/her. The staff person tends to see people in “crisis” versus courtesy calls for educating. Please reference *Frequently Asked Questions* for answers “why” you would want to see a staff person. (Actually, you are waiting to see the staff person for the same reason you want to see the Representative – to educate a decision maker about your ESOP company and to highlight any important ESOP legislative developments.)]

## Getting To Your Visit

### House

#### Subway

1. If arriving on Capitol Hill by subway called “Metro” in DC: Be sure to take subway “Orange” or “Blue” Line, and exit subway/Metro at the Capitol Hill South station.

The escalator will put you at a corner, where to your front, left as you ride up the escalator is the Cannon House Office Building (CHOB). To the left of the Cannon House Office Building is the Longworth House Office Building (LHOB), and to the left beyond the LHOB is the Rayburn House Office Building (RHOB).

Learn the office building and number of the member you are going to see. This information is available at [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov).

For example:

- If three digits, the office is in the CHOB, as is 242 CHOB, is office 242, Cannon, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.
- If four digits, and the first digit is “1”, the office is in the LHOB, as in 1210 LHOB. The second digit is the floor number; so 1210 is in LHOB on the second floor.
- If your congressperson’s office number is 2428, the “2” means it is in the RHOB, on the fourth floor.

And remember, there are police on every corner at every door to answer questions. And at every entrance there is a Directory listing alphabetically of all House members with office numbers.

#### Taxi

2. If you arrive on the Hill via taxi, it costs about \$10 plus tip from the Hotel, tell driver to take you to the House Office Building you have to go to. No address is needed.

- See number 1 above to know numbering system of House offices.

## Senate

### **Subway**

1. If taking the subway/Metro, you will take the “Red” Line to Union Station. (It is about a three/four block walk to the Senate Office Buildings from Union Station.)
2. There are three Senate Office Buildings just like the House office complex. But the Senate office numbering system is different from the House’s.

The three Senate Office Buildings are the Senate Russell Office Building, the Senate Dirksen Office Building, and the Senate Hart Office Building.

For example:

- If the Senator you wish to visit is in the Senate Russell Office Building, his/her office number will appear as follows: SR-242. SR stands for Senate Russell Office Building, which as you walk to from Union Station is on your right hand side. The “2” means second floor.
- If the office number is SD-521, this office is in the Senate Dirksen Office Building, on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor.
- If the office number is SH-104, this office is in the Senate Hart office Building on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor.

As you walk from Union Station, the Senate Dirksen and Senate Hart Office Buildings are on your left.

### **Taxi**

1. If you travel by taxi to your Senate appointment, it is an \$8 to \$10 ride, just give the name of the Senate Office Building and you will be driven to the appropriate office building.
2. See the Senate Office Building numbering system above.

## Your Are There: Now What?

### Your Visit with a Member of Congress

- A Representative's office has one or two "receptionists" in the room you walk into.
- Introduce yourself, and say, "I have an appointment with Representative [Name] at \_\_\_\_\_ [Time]." OR "With Mr./Ms. [Name of Staff Person]."
- Try to arrive at least 10 minutes early.
- The receptionist will either check with the scheduler to see if you are correct, or s/he will have the schedule in front of him/her to confirm what you say.
- If the Representative is in the office, and on schedule, you will be ushered into his or her office, and usually the staff person responsible for tax policy will join you.
- Try to say your spiel in 10 minutes, and plan to ask for a photo of you (the group) and the Representative.
- If this is your first time you have ever been in a room for a conversation with your Representative, your message should be along these general lines:

**Representative [After introductions]:** "What can I do for you?"

**You:** [After introductions say]:

"[I][We] are in town for the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual ESOP Association Conference. The Association represents nearly 1,500 employee-owned corporations throughout the U.S. with an employee stock ownership, or ESOP."

"[Name of Company]'s ESOP is very important to our [X] (Number of Employees) employees, to the well-being of our company, and to [Name of Community, Town, City] because we provide good jobs, with good benefits, in [Name of Community, Town, City]."

"You are aware ESOPs are sanctioned by Federal law, primarily tax laws, and thus we are always interested in legislative developments here in Congress."

"I leave this one-page summary of issues we are following and are concerned about this year. [You will have a one-page drop-off sheet.] We also include summaries of the overwhelming evidence from 30 years of research that ESOP companies out perform their non-ESOP competitors, and provide better pay, and are better places to work."

**Representative:** (Probably will say something nice. Maybe, just maybe, will say, "I am aware that many times employee ownership works well, but I am concerned that in the recent economic climate too many employee are losing their life savings due to their companies' going bankrupt and then their life

savings becoming worthless.”

**You:** [If doubt is expressed.] “Representative [Name], we realize there are no guarantees in a free enterprise system. But again, data proves the vast majority, in fact the overwhelming majority of employee owned companies succeed, and provide stable, good paying jobs with benefits, better savings plans that are diversified.”

**Important:** You (No matter how a Representative responds to your initial tout of your company and ESOPs.): “We would love for you to visit [Name of Company] to learn first hand the power of employee ownership at [Name of Company].”

**Representative:** “I would like to do that. Contact [Name of Staffer] to make that arrangement.”

[Note: To have the all important company visit, it will require your aggressiveness later to call, etc. to make arrangements. See the Association’s “Congressional Visit” Kit on the website and download.]

**You:** “Fine, good. We can perhaps take more time then to discuss the developments we are interested in. Now, we know your time is short, but how about a picture before we leave to put in [Name of Company] newsletter or even in the national ESOP Association newsletter.”

(Have someone from your group ready to take a picture, or welcome someone of the Representative’s staff taking a picture if you are visiting alone or in order to get all of your in the picture.)

**You:** (Say Goodbye, and express your appreciation for the visit. Remember to leave off the one-pager on current ESOP issues, and summary of research on ESOP companies.)

*If you have visited with your Representative before start with*

“You recall we met at [\_\_\_\_\_]; OR you recall my [Relative, best friend, etc.] is [Name].”

Briefly exchange pleasantries related to prior connection.

- If you have visited with your Representative before and discussed issues say: “You recall I visited with you about our employee stock ownership plan, or ESOP, last [Refer to the Date.] Just want to take a minute or two to bring you up to speed on our ESOP. [I][We] will leave a brief summary of some things we are following as ESOP advocates.”

## **Suggested Dialogue if Meeting with Staff Aide to Your Representative**

*Commentary: Often the only appointment you can obtain in a Congressional office will be with a staff aide. And, often, you will have an appointment with your Representative and intervening events will prevent his or her keeping the appointment – such as a committee meeting, votes on the House floor, unexpected travel delays, etc., and a staff person will substitute for your Representative.*

- If you are meeting with a staff aide, be sure it is the aide whose area of responsibility is tax issues.

*More Commentary: The message you give to the staff person is the same as the message you would give to your Representative, [see above], except don't ask to take a picture.*

- Be sure to end dialogue with the staff person with an open invitation for the Representative to visit your company and say the same invitation extends to the staff person when she or he is visiting back in the district or state.
- Leave off the same one-page paper and research summary, as you would with the Representative.
- But, ask the staff person to “Please tell the Representative that you dropped by, to talk about your ESOP, and please share the information you leave with the Representative.”
- A staff person, particularly a senior staff person, may be more challenging, or even cynical about your message, and say negative things about company stock ownership.
- Just politely hold your ground, talk about your company, do not point fingers at other ESOP companies, and emphasize the research that overwhelmingly evidences ESOP companies out perform non-ESOP companies, and provide better benefits.

### **Follow-Up**

When you go back home, write a letter thanking the Representative for his/her time, or the staffer, and say once again s/he is invited to visit your company.

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. I prefer to E-mail. Why should I use the old-fashioned telephone?

**Answer:** Because congressional offices are overwhelmed with literally thousands of emails a day, and it is impossible to pay personal attention to relevant emails. And while the telephone call may always be met by voice mail, generally constituent calls are tended to.

The only exception to this telephone-email rule is when a staff person gives you his or her personal email address and invites you to email.

2. I am from [California] [Texas] [Florida] [etc.], shouldn't all members of the House of Representatives want to see me?

**Answer:** No, because there is only 24 hours in a day, and because the Constitution of the United States set up a Representative form of government, not an "at-large" Congress. In other words, a Member of Congress represents people in her or his district if a member of the House, and her or his state if a Senator.

Furthermore, our form of government makes "voters" who will vote for or against a Member of Congress the most important people in the world to a Member of Congress.

Candidly, don't waste your time trying to see Members of Congress for which you have no opportunity to vote for.

This answer is based on reality, not on any flaws in our republican form of government.

3. Is it worth while to see a staff person, instead of my Member of Congress?

**Answer:** Yes, seeing a staff person is a valuable use of time. It is true, some staff persons play a major role in helping his and her boss make decisions, while others are "paper" shufflers. You, however, should assume the staff person you are meeting with is "important", not a "paper" shuffler.



## **Employee Ownership and Corporate Performance**

1. In June 2008, Brent Kramer, a doctoral candidate at the City University of New York, now Ph.D., submitted a study, *Employee Ownership and Participation Effects on Firm Outcomes*, that “provides strong evidence that majority employee-owned businesses have a significant advantage over comparable traditionally-owned businesses in sales per employee.” The average advantage, \$44,500, means that a typical 200 person ESOP firm could be expected to have an almost \$9 million annual sales advantage over its non-ESOP counterpart. Sales per employee is the total of a company’s sales divided by the number of employees, and is a commonly used measure of a company’s productivity. Highlights of the study include: 1.) Using standard statistical methods, it was found that the average sales advantage for the ESOP firms in the study was \$44,500, or an average of an 8.8% sales per employee advantage over their non-ESOP counterparts in the same industry and of the same size; 2.) It was found that firms that ask for non-management employee input into innovation in work processes have a greater employee-owned advantage in sales per employee; 3.) Kramer’s research indicates the sales per employee advantage for the 50% plus ESOP companies compared to non-ESOP companies is less for larger employers. The Employee Ownership Foundation providing funding for the research and The ESOP Association contributed membership information to the study. A total of 328 ESOP firms and over 2,000 matching non-ESOP firms were included in the study.
2. In January 2007, the co-operative relationship between The ESOP Association and the University of Pennsylvania’s Center for Organizational Dynamics led to an important new and “fresh” study of the effectiveness of ESOPs and employee ownership as uncovered in 30 years of scholarly research on the issue. The study, “Effects of ESOP Adoption and Employee Ownership: Thirty Years of Research and Experience,” authored by Dr. Stephen F. Freeman, Affiliated Faculty and Visiting Scholar in the Center for Organizational Dynamics, Graduate Division, School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania, confirms what the Association has been saying for years, that employee-owned companies experience increased productivity, profitability, and longevity. To download the study, “Effects of ESOP Adoption and Employee Ownership: Thirty Years of Research and Experience,” please visit the University of Pennsylvania’s Library Digital Archive -[http://repository.upenn.edu/od\\_working\\_papers/2/](http://repository.upenn.edu/od_working_papers/2/). The research was possible thanks to a generous, unrestricted donation to the University by ESOP Association member company, Alliance Holdings Inc. of Willow Grove, PA. Alliance is also a significant donor to the Employee Ownership Foundation, which gives significant donations to the University of Pennsylvania’s Center for Organizational Dynamics Program.
3. In 2008, the Employee Ownership Foundation, conducting its 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Economic Performance Survey, found that a very high percentage of companies, 92.4%, declared that creating employee ownership through an ESOP (employee stockownership plan) was “a good decision that has helped the company.” In addition, the EPS asked companies to indicate their performance in 2007, relative to 2006. Approximately 66% of respondents indicated a better performance in 2007 than 2006, 13% indicated a nearly identical performance, and 21% indicated a worse performance. Around 71% indicated that revenue increased while 29% indicated revenue did not increase. In terms of profitability, 66% indicated that profitability did increase and 34% indicated that profitability did not increase in 2007. This survey was conducted in the summer of 2008 among corporate members of The ESOP Association. The results are based on 421 responses.

4. The most comprehensive and significant study to date of ESOP performance in closely held companies was conducted by Dr. Joseph R. Blasi and Dr. Douglas L. Kruse, professors at the School of Management and Labor Relations at Rutgers University, and funded in part by the Employee Ownership Foundation. The study, which paired *1,100 ESOP companies* with *1,100 comparable non-ESOP companies* and followed the businesses for *over a decade*, reported overwhelmingly positive and remarkable results indicating that ESOPs appear to increase sales, employment, and sales/employee by about 2.3% to 2.4% over what would have been anticipated, absent an ESOP. In addition, Drs. Blasi and Kruse examined whether ESOP companies stayed in business longer than non-ESOP companies and found that 77.9% of the ESOP companies followed as part of the survey survived as compared to 62.3% of the comparable non-ESOP companies. According to Drs. Blasi and Kruse, ESOP companies are also more likely to continue operating as independent companies over the course of several years. Also, it is substantially more probable that ESOP companies have other retirement-oriented benefit plans than comparable non-ESOP companies, such as defined benefit plans, 401(k) plans, and profit sharing plans.
5. Research done by the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development of over 100 Washington not publicly-traded ESOP companies compared to 500 not publicly-traded non-ESOP companies showed that the ESOP companies paid better benefits, had twice the retirement income for employees, and paid higher wages than their non-ESOP counterparts. *Wealth and Income Consequences of Employee Ownership: A Comparative Study from Washington State*, Kardas, Peter A., Scharf, Adria L., Keogh, Jim, November, 1998.
6. Research conducted by Professor Hamid Mehran, while he served on the faculty of the J.L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management, Northwestern University, of nearly 400 publicly traded companies with significant ESOPs both before and after the adoption of the ESOP, compared to non-ESOP companies in similar lines of businesses, showed that the rate of return for the ESOP companies was 2.7% higher, 60% of the ESOP companies experienced share price increases upon announcement of the ESOP program, and 82% indicated that the ESOP had a positive impact on business results.
7. In 1995, Douglas Kruse of Rutgers University examined several different studies between ESOPs and productivity growth. Kruse found through an analysis of all studies that "positive and significant coefficients [are found] much more often than would be expected if there were no true relation between ESOPs and productivity." Kruse concludes that "the average estimated productivity difference between ESOP and non-ESOP firms is 5.3%, while the average estimated pre/post-adoption difference is 4.4% and the post-adoption growth rate is 0.6% higher in ESOP firms. Kruse cites two studies as part of his research: Kumbhakar and Dunbar's 1993 study of 123 public firms and Mitchell's 1990 study of 495 U.S. business units in public firms. Both reports found significant positive effects of greater productivity and profitability in the first few years after a company adopted an ESOP.
8. . In 1995, the U.S. Department of Labor released a study entitled "The Financial and Non-Financial Returns to Innovative Workplace Practices: A Critical Review." This study found that companies that seek employee participation, give employees company stock, and train employees, can positively affect American corporations' bottom lines. In addition, the report cited three studies that analyzed "the market reaction to announcements of ESOPs which found significant positive returns to firms which implemented ESOPs as part of a broader employee benefit or wage concession plan." The three studies are: Chang's 1990 "Employee Stock Ownership Plans and Shareholder Wealth: An Empirical Investigation," Dhillon and Ramirez' 1994 "Employee Stock Ownership and Corporate Control," and Gordon and Pound's 1990 "ESOPs and Corporate Control." citation at (202) 293-2971 or E-mail: [esop@esopassociation.org](mailto:esop@esopassociation.org).

For additional information about ESOP or The ESOP Association, visit the website at [www.esopassociation.org](http://www.esopassociation.org), call 1-866-366-3832, or email [esop@esopassociation.org](mailto:esop@esopassociation.org).