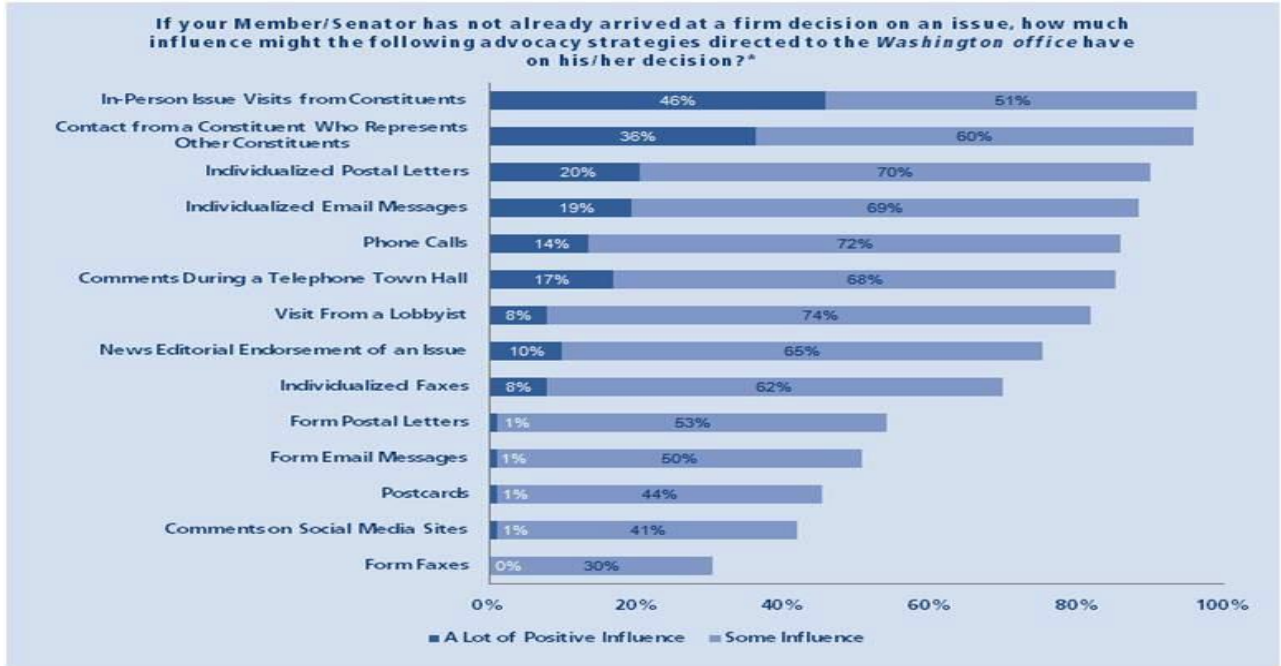


Invite Your Community to Meet With Legislators in August

August is congressional recess month, which means your representatives and senators will be in their states and districts. This is a perfect opportunity to continue our efforts to build overwhelming political will around [our maternal and child health \(MCH\) campaign](#). Request face-to-face meetings with representatives and senators you have not met with recently and/or develop deeper relationships with the local staff. Bring community members into the fold by inviting them to come along and by taking their letters, media, and other evidence of community support.

Since its inception RESULTS has promoted face-to-face visits between constituents and members of Congress as the most effective way to build the political will for change. This idea has been reinforced with members of Congress, congressional aides, and polling. A recent poll of more than 250 congressional staff by the [Congressional Management Foundation](#) (CMF) confirms that face-to-face constituent meetings with our members of Congress is the most influential tactic we have in our toolkit. The poll also found that constituents who communicate with congressional offices in a *personal* manner verses impersonal online actions, petitions, or form letters, are more influential than paid lobbyists.



Action #1: Reach Out to Your Community During August Recess

On our July 2015 Global Webinar/Conference Call, Rep. David Reichert (R-WA) said that he knows there is community support for an issue when people from different parts of the community come together to meet with him on something the all care about. The August congressional recess is an opportunity to demonstrate broad community support for members of Congress to take action on forthcoming MCH bills. Many community members have never met with a representative or

senator, or congressional aide, so inviting your community member to join you is also a way to inspire them about the difference they can make with RESULTS. Here are some ideas for engaging community:

1. If you attend the International Conference, do a community debrief with your action network and ask who would be willing to attend congressional meetings you are setting up.
2. Form a diverse group of people (faith communities, medical community, Returned Peace Corps, children's advocates, teachers, neighbors, etc.) The more diverse the group, the better!
3. Organize letter-writing meetings with various constituencies in your community and gather letters from people with all kind of backgrounds. Make sure people sign their letters with what they do for a living or their titles. Take the letters to your meetings with members of Congress.

Action #2: Book and Prepare for Local Congressional Meeting

For complete tips on how to schedule, plan for, and follow up on your face-to-face meeting, check out our [Activist Milestone: Meet Face-to-Face with Your Member of Congress](#). Top steps:

1. **Request your meeting now** using our [July Laser Talk](#) to insure you get a meeting.
2. **Use our website to find the scheduler:** Check out <http://capwiz.com/results/dbq/officials/> to find the scheduler. If you don't reach them the first time you call, leave a succinct voicemail then follow up with an email using the following formulas:
firstname.lastname@mail.house.gov or firstname_lastname@senatorlastname.senate.gov.
[Visit our website for a draft meeting request letter that you can personalize.](#)
3. **Persist!** If the member of Congress has no time to meet in August, ask for a meeting at the first available time. Follow up every couple of days!
4. **Invite your group, community contacts, and action network** to participate in the meeting. Explain how the group will work together to craft an agenda, practice for the meeting, and support each other through the process. Refer to [the sample agenda online](#) as you map out roles, responsibilities, and plans for your meeting.
5. **Practice for the meeting.** After you create an agenda, each person with a speaking part should create a brief two- or three-minute [laser talk](#) on the main meeting issue and practice it with another person. Prepare to be brief, clear, personal, and to the point.
6. **Make sure everyone attending has a role to play.** Whether it's introducing the group, or sharing the leave-behind materials, everyone should have the chance to contribute.
7. **Share inspiration within your group.** Prior to the meeting, allow time for group members to spend a few minutes speaking about why they each care about the issues, and the outcomes they hope to achieve. This will help you set your head and hearts to the task you're about to undertake.
8. **Celebrate and follow up.** Debrief after the meeting and allow everyone to share their excitement. Make a plan to follow up on requests and invite people to your next meeting.

Action #3: Bird-dog at Public Gatherings

The recess is also a great opportunity for bird-dogging. As prospective candidates take to the campaign trail, constituents have a perfect opportunity to raise the issues we care about and ask candidates to articulate their views on those issues. This is called bird-dogging. [Review our top tips for town hall and campaign trail bird-dogging](#), and [read about how to bring together bird-dogging and coalition-building in your community](#).