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## Tips for Inviting an Elected Official to your Event

### 1) Schedule far in advance with multiple options

The further out you can schedule your event the better. Elected officials' calendars fill up very quickly. In addition, give the elected official multiple dates and times to choose from, as this will significantly increase the chance they can attend. Finally, if the official is a legislator, look to see when their legislature is likely to have votes. For example, some state legislatures are only in session a few months a year and vote any day of the week, while others are in session all year but only vote on one day of the week. Scheduling with these times in mind will make it easier for a legislator to attend and will give you an idea of whether they are likely to be in the capital city or in their home district.

### 2) Contact their scheduler or local office

If you are inviting a member of Congress to your event, reach out to their local office so that they know you are in their District. No matter which office you are contacting, don't hesitate to go directly to their scheduler. It is appropriate to send an invite for an elected official directly to their scheduler. This will eliminate any lost time from the elected official or their staffer sorting through the official's crowded inbox.

### 3) Explain how attending will benefit the elected official

Use a sentence or two in your invitation to the elected official to explain how attending your event will benefit them. You might point out to them that the event will be an opportunity for them to speak to a specific group of constituents, or that the event is often attended by a group that supports the elected official.

### 4) Be clear in what's expected

If you want the elected official to speak at your event, be sure to make that clear in your invitation. Explain what you would like them to speak on, for how long, whether there will



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be questions, and whether you will be able to provide questions in advance. It is not poor form to provide elected officials questions in advance, as this gives their staff time to help them work on responses, and often staff can push them to be more proactive in their answer than an off-the-cuff answer may dictate. Remember, you are not the media trying to catch the elected official off-guard, you are an advocate attempting to get them to support your priorities.

## **5) Let the elected official know if media will be there**

It is always important to be open with an elected official about who their audience will be and whether media will be at the event. Elected officials often enjoy the attention that comes with media reports of their speeches. Other times, an elected official may appreciate the opportunity to speak frankly to a distinct group of constituents. Regardless, it is important that they know which will be the setup of your meeting and you should relay that information in your invitation.