

MEETING YOUR REPRESENTATIVE. THE DOS AND DON'TS

DO

- Be on time. Call ahead if you're running late.
- Introduce yourself: who you are, what kind of operation you run, how many people you employ.
- Be respectful, warm friendly.
- Keep message simple. Briefly and succinctly talk about what an issue means to your business, especially in terms of jobs.
- Encourage questions. Offer to come back with extra information if that would be helpful.
- Expect the meeting to last no more than 15 minutes. Be the first to wrap it up.
- Ask your member of Congress his or her position on the issue.
- Find out which staff person will serve as a contact.
- Follow up with a thank-you letter.

DON'T

- Don't assume they're against you-even if you haven't liked their votes in the past. Each issue presents a new opportunity.
- Don't assume your representative knows the issue. There are literally thousands of bills introduced each year. Provide basic background.
- Don't assume they know the balloon business. Most representatives don't have business experience. Use concrete examples to help them understand how AB 2709 legislation affects your business.
- Don't let your representative avoid the issue; be polite but direct in asking their position on an issue.
- Don't let the conversation get off-track. If the discussion starts to wander, gently steer it back to the issue at hand.
- Don't threaten to withdraw support if they don't do what you say.
- Don't promise campaign contributions in exchange for vote.

WHAT IF YOU'RE ONLY ABLE TO MEET WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVE'S STAFFER?

If your representative is unable to meet with you, make the most of your meeting with a staff person. You won't regret it.

- They will probably spend more time with you and learn more about your position.
- They are your best allies in getting your representative to focus on issue.
- You now have a great contact for follow-up calls and letters.
- They are likely to be responsive. (After all, they want their boss to look good!)
- Send a follow-up note to your representative telling them you hope to meet with them next time-and follow up with the staff person too!