



ARRANGING A MEETING WITH A CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OFFICE

One of the most impactful ways to communicate your interests with elected officials is by setting up a face-to-face meeting while they are home in their districts. All Members of Congress have a district office and in some cases may have multiple offices to serve you. These offices exist to communicate with constituents like you, so don't hesitate to reach out to set up a meeting with your legislator.

GETTING STARTED:

- While some legislators may provide a meeting request form on their website, ICSC recommends that you start by calling the district office first. The office will tell you their preferred method to formally request a meeting (mail, fax or email). Be prepared to let them know why you are requesting a meeting.
- When submitting the written request, include a summary of who you are and what you plan to discuss with the legislator. Example:

I am a local retail real estate developer and a member of the International Council of Shopping Centers. I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with the Representative to discuss how the online sales tax loophole is impacting local business and the importance of Congress taking action to fix this problem this year.

I would like to set up a time while the Representative is home during the July 4th work period. I am happy to provide further information about my business and the issue in preparation of the meeting. I look forward to hearing from you with potential dates for a meeting.

- If they do not respond within a week, call the office back to follow up on the status of your request. Keep in mind that it can take a few weeks to confirm a meeting date, so you may have to follow up weekly on your request, until a date is set.

AFTER THE DATE IS SET:

- Make sure you prepare clear examples and stories about how e-fairness is impacting your business and local retailers. Provide as many numbers as possible to quantify the impact. The legislator can use this information when defending your concerns back in Washington.
- Call to confirm your meeting time a couple of days before the appointment.

AT THE MEETING:

- Keep your discussion focused. Avoid bringing up non-related issues for which the legislator is not prepared. This will detract from your central message.
- Keep an eye on the time. If your scheduled time is 30 minutes, don't try to squeeze in an extra 15 minutes.
- Never lie. If you do not know the answer to a question, it is perfectly acceptable to admit that a follow up with the office after the meeting. Contact ICSC's Office of Global Public Policy at gpp@icsc.org if you need help finding the answer.
- Ask how you can be helpful to the legislator.
- Provide leave behind information that the legislator can reference after the meeting is over. (The next page of this guide makes a good leave behind!)
- *Please note: If your elected official is not supporting our position, avoid arguing with him or her. Instead, ask questions to gather their concerns and better understand his or her position. That information is still very helpful in our efforts to pass e-fairness.*

AFTER THE MEETING:

- Within a week following the meeting, send a thank you letter. Make sure to include a brief summary of topics that were discussed during the meeting. Include any outstanding information that you agreed to provide.
- If the office asked a question you were not able to answer, please let ICSC's Office of Global Public Policy know, and we will likely be able to help.
- Please share a brief summary of your meeting with ICSC's Office of Global Public Policy by sending an email to gpp@icsc.org. This information helps ICSC staff lobby more effectively on your behalf when legislators are back on Capitol Hill.



H.R. 2775, The Remote Transactions Parity Act of 2015 **It's Time to Restore Fairness to Local Businesses**

Local businesses need Congress to pass RTPA and stop picking winners and losers.

- Current sales tax policy provides as much as a 10% government subsidy for online sellers.
- Sellers should compete on price, inventory and customer service, not on tax treatment.
- RTPA would restore free-market principles to the marketplace by leveling the playing field for businesses in our communities.

RTPA ensures that there is parity at the time of sale.

- RTPA is based on destination sourcing, which means that the tax rate is based on the location of the consumer.
- Since sales tax is a consumption tax and not a tax on the business, it makes sense that the tax rate should be based on the location of the consumer.
- By basing the tax rate on the location of the consumer, RTPA ensures that all sales are treated the same regardless of how the purchase is made; in a store or online.
- RTPA makes sure that foreign sellers collect sales taxes on behalf of the consumer so that local businesses are not disadvantaged.

RTPA provides balance between states' rights and protections for remote and multi-channel sellers.

- RTPA recognizes that today's modern marketplace needs certainty and a uniform standard for sales and use tax collection.
- RTPA acknowledges the current collection system used by thousands of remote and multi-location sellers and does not require new accounting systems to be instituted.
- RTPA establishes audit protections for remote sellers and requires states to provide sales tax collection software and integration to remote sellers free of charge.
- RTPA allows for a transition period for smaller remote sellers.
- RTPA broadens the tax base, promotes a more stable revenue stream for state and local governments and positions them to lower taxes for their residents and businesses.

The time has come for Congress to pass e-fairness legislation.

- Congress has considered e-fairness legislation for more than a decade and has held close to 40 hearings related to this issue.
- The same technology that makes online retail a reality has already simplified sales tax calculation and collection for sellers.
- RTPA is the product of an inclusive stakeholder process and has wide support by the business community and state and local governments.