

## Advocacy Tip Sheet

### April 2011

It is important to develop a good relationship with your legislator and their staff to help them understand CTE. Legislators care about what their constituents are concerned about and your advocacy efforts could make a difference in their legislative decisions. As CTE experts, you are in the best position to educate your legislator and their staff on the issues that are most critical to the CTE community. Here are some effective tips for advocating at the federal level.

- **Start close to home:** While you may be able to meet with staff when you are in Washington, DC, it is also important to develop a relationship with the Congressman's staff in their home state or district.
- **Plan ahead:** Identify yourself and your organization when you schedule your meeting in advance. Staff is very happy to meet with constituents, but is very busy and cannot usually accommodate drop-ins.
- **Do your homework:** Research your legislator and his/her background by looking at their website. Find out which committees he or she serves on and what bills he or she has introduced.
- **The "ask":** Be specific about what action you would like your legislator to take. If you are advocating for a specific bill then reference the bill number or title. Be concise in your written and verbal communication.
- **Provide information:** Leave something behind such as a fact sheet or newspaper article relevant to the Congressman's state or district.
- **Stay in touch:** Continue the relationship after the visit with a thank you note and follow up phone calls and emails when appropriate. Send staffers newspaper clippings of student or school success. Share newsletters. Invite the Congressman and his staff to tour your programs.
- **Report back:** Update NASDCTEc on your visit and the progress you made.
- **Stay involved:** Attend town hall meetings in your state or district. Sign up for the Congressman's newsletter.

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