



# 2013

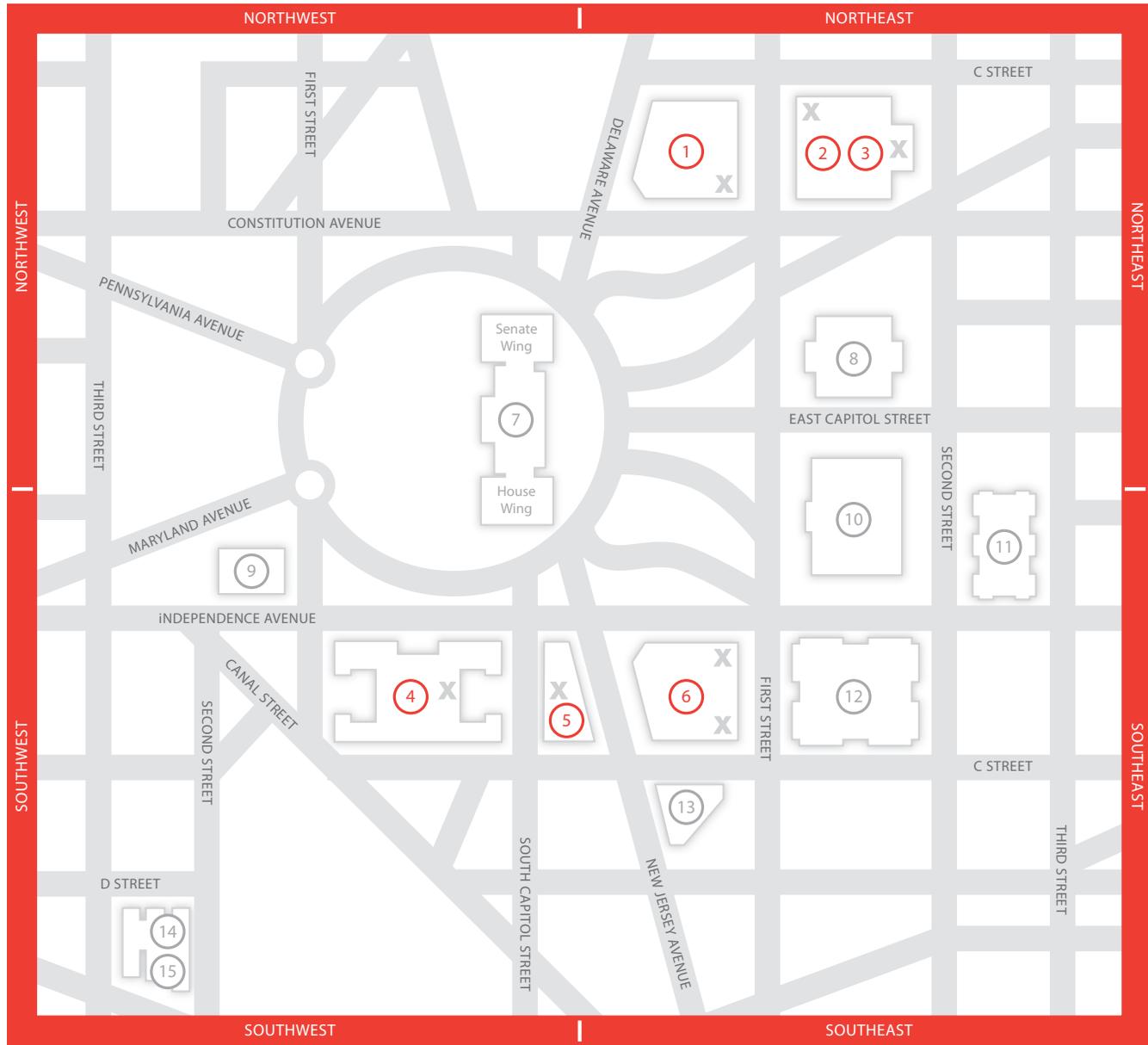
## MEMBER HOW-TO GUIDE TO CAPITOL HILL DAY AND ADVOCACY365



THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE  
OF ARCHITECTS

# CAPITOL HILL

The Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill (Hyatt) is on New Jersey Avenue, NW, and is two blocks away from the northwest corner of the capitol grounds. Distances from the Hyatt to each house office building are listed below. Please make sure you give yourself ample time to get to the correct office building, pass thru a security check point, and walk to the office for your meeting.



| Building                           | Distance from Hyatt | Walking Time |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| 1. Russell Senate Office Building  | 0.4 miles           | 7 minutes    |
| 2. Dirksen Senate Office Building  | 0.5 miles           | 10 minutes   |
| 3. Hart Senate Office Building     | 0.5 miles           | 11 minutes   |
| 4. Rayburn House Office Building   | 0.7 miles           | 15 minutes   |
| 5. Longworth House Office Building | 0.8 miles           | 17 minutes   |
| 6. Cannon House Office Building    | 0.9 miles           | 19 minutes   |
| Travel between Point 2 and Point 5 | 0.5 miles           | 9 minutes    |

| Other Buildings                   |
|-----------------------------------|
| 7. United States Capitol Building |
| 8. Supreme Court Building         |
| 9. Botanic Garden                 |
| 10. Jefferson Library of Congress |
| 11. Adams Library of Congress     |
| 12. Madison Library of Congress   |
| 13. O'Neill House Office Building |
| 14. Ford House Office Building    |
| 15. Congressional Budget Office   |

X denotes additional public entrances and exits to the office buildings.

## TIPS FOR MEETING WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS

### DO:

#### Introduce yourself.

Remember to tell the legislator or staff member who you are, where you are from, what you do, and that you are a member of the AIA. Do not assume they have this information.

#### Be flexible, be polite.

Members of Congress have very busy schedules that change constantly. It is important to stay flexible and understand that you may have to meet with staff, your meeting may be cut short or interrupted, or that you may be meeting with someone who may disagree. Always maintain flexibility, and be polite regardless of your personal opinion.

#### Ask for something.

Remember to make specific asks on the AIA's bills and key issues. The talking points on the next page will help guide that part of the conversation.

#### Make it personal.

You are the expert on the design industry, and you should utilize this opportunity to educate your elected officials about the needs and concerns of the industry. Legislators want to know how a specific issue will affect their district, so use personal or local experiences to emphasize your points. Members of Congress relate most to issues that have a direct impact on the constituents they represent.

#### Set the expectation for future interaction.

Invite the representative to take part in an activity in the district, e.g., component meeting or a site tour. Let the legislator know that this is the first of (hopefully) many future interactions. If possible, ask for a district contact to schedule an in-district activity.

#### Say 'Thank You.'

We are always asking our legislators for something so thank them for their hard work, and ask what you can do for them.

#### Follow up.

Take the time after your meeting to fill out the feedback survey online so AIA staff know how to follow up with you or your legislator. And, send your legislator a thank you note reviewing the issues you discussed. Samples are available at [www.aia.org/advocacy365](http://www.aia.org/advocacy365).

#### Have fun.

This is not only a great opportunity for you, but it's a great opportunity for legislators and staff to hear from their constituents. Enjoy it!

### DON'T:

#### Feel slighted.

You may have to meet with staff or only have three minutes to talk in a crowded hallway. Remember, every opportunity to communicate with legislators and their staff is a great opportunity to show our commitment to our profession and to our issues. Take advantage of it.

#### Feel like you need to know everything.

If someone asks a question, and you don't know the answer, offer to have AIA staff follow up with the requested information. Don't make answers up or feel like you are expected to be an expert on legislative issues.

#### Miss the opportunity.

Don't just say "hi" or read from the talking points. Share your story—that is the one the legislator wants to hear.

#### Talk about money.

Keep fundraising and campaign conversations separate. Have those conversations back in the district outside of a member's office.

### Discussions of Political Contributions on Federal Property

In your meetings with legislators and Hill staff please keep in mind the following points:

- Discussion of campaign contributions of any kind are not allowed at all times.
- This applies to discussions about ArchiPAC and any other political action committee (PAC).
- Political action committees have been in the news a lot recently and will continue to be a hot topic. Please remember that any conversations you have may be overheard by individuals other than those associated with the AIA.

Capitol Hill Day is an opportunity to share the AIA's issues and solutions with our leaders in Congress. Thank you for your attention to these important matters.

# THE AIA'S FEDERAL AGENDA TALKING POINTS WHEN MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND STAFF

## INTRODUCTION

- Express thanks for meeting with you.
- The AIA and its more than 81,000 members are committed to serving the public, both as designers of the built environment, and as advocates for policies that help create stronger, healthier, and more sustainable communities.
- Architects are the front line of an industry that accounts for one in nine dollars of U.S. Gross Domestic Product. Every \$1 billion invested in building design and construction yields 28,500 full-time jobs.
- Our agenda for the 113th Congress is “Let’s Get America Building.” As the economy recovers, architects are ready and willing to get to work helping our communities thrive.
- But to do so, we need Congress’ help passing legislation that helps small firms thrive, promotes good design, and ensures that young architects can enter the profession.

## SIMPLIFY TAXES, PROTECT SMALL BUSINESSES.

### Key message

**Congress should protect small businesses as it debates tax reform.**

- Highlight the fact that approximately eight in ten architecture firms are organized as pass-throughs (sole proprietors, S corporations and partnerships) that pay taxes at individual—not corporate—rates.
- Inform the lawmaker that passing corporate-only tax reform (i.e., lowering corporate tax rates, but not individual tax rates) will hurt small businesses in every industry. Important incentives that pass-throughs rely on could be wiped away for lower corporate rates.
- Share a story of how your business has used a business tax incentive to make it through the tough economy or create more jobs. Incentives can include everything from historic preservation and low income housing tax credits, to energy efficiency tax deductions, to accelerated depreciation.
- Explain that without these incentives, your business, and millions of others across the nation, will see their taxes rise, and their clients seek less work.
- Stress that architects are not looking for special tax breaks, but rather, to be treated equitably in tax reform.

### Key ask

**Support efforts for comprehensive tax reform and oppose corporate-only reform.**

## SAVE ENERGY, CREATE JOBS.

### Key message

**In order to encourage new construction and renovations, and support small businesses that do this work, Congress should extend and make modest improvements to the Energy Efficient Commercial Building Tax Deduction (179D).**

- Describe how commercial and institutional buildings in your district/state have been made more energy efficient, saving energy costs for the owner.
- Highlight that buildings account for more than 70 percent of electricity consumption in the U.S. and that architects have the design skills needed to make them more energy efficient and save money for owners.
- Explain to the lawmaker that the Energy Efficient Commercial Building Tax Deduction provides building owners up to a \$1.80 per square foot for energy efficient improvements. It also helps federal, state, and local governments finance energy improvements that reduce energy costs to taxpayers.
- Describe how the Energy Efficient Commercial Building Tax Deduction has been a useful financing tool in the market. But it will expire at the end of this year—unless Congress extends it.

### Key ask

**Support bipartisan efforts being led in the Senate by Sen. Ben Cardin, (D-MD) and in the House by Reps. Dave Reichert (R-WA) and Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) that extend and improve the Energy Efficient Commercial Building Tax Deduction.**

## INVEST IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS.

### Key message

**Architecture students are willing and able to contribute their design abilities to help their communities in exchange for student loan assistance, but they need Congress' help to make that happen.**

- Point out that federal policies encourage students and recent graduates to work in underserved areas in exchange for student debt relief. There are federal programs to help medical, legal, and veterinary students in exchange for pro bono work, but not architects.
- Explain how a 2012 survey by the American Institute of Architecture Students showed that graduating architecture students carry much higher undergraduate student debt—\$40,000 on average—than graduates in many other professions. If these graduates cannot find work, they will leave the profession.
- Note that architects are the first professionals in a long chain of design and construction workers, and they are needed to make sure buildings are safe and follow building codes. If recent graduates leave the profession, it will be more difficult for construction work to return to full speed.
- Describe emerging professionals you know who are facing huge debt and thinking of leaving the profession. Describe the challenges your firm and community face if they leave.
- Explain that architecture students and post graduates can provide design work that helps communities recover after disasters and bring about economic vitality.
- Inform the lawmaker that the AIA has developed a draft bill, the National Design Services Act, to extend to architecture graduates student debt relief in exchange for pro bono work.
- More information on the National Design Services Act can be found on the AIA Federal Issues Agenda Web page.

### Key ask

**That House Representatives and Senators sponsor the bill.**

## IMPROVE GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT TO HELP THE ECONOMY.

### Key message

**Sharp cuts to design and construction budgets make it more important than ever that procurement laws ensure small businesses have fair access to the federal marketplace.**

- Note that an October 2012 analysis by the AIA found that sequestration could cost as many as 66,000 jobs in the design and construction industry.
- Point out that nearly 95 percent of AIA member firms employ 50 or fewer people, and that many are sole practitioners who are struggling to stay afloat in the current economy.
- Explain that while spending cuts are necessary, deep cuts in design and construction budgets will delay needed repairs and renovations, which will only cost more to address in the future.
- Discuss how the federal marketplace makes it hard for small firms to participate—less work means more competition for fewer jobs, and the cost of competing is rising. In particular, it averages \$260,000 for an architecture firm to participate in a design-build competition, and that cost is not often reimbursed. As a result, many firms are not taking part, depriving the government of good talent.
- Explain that by making the overall federal construction process fairer and more efficient, more funds would be available to repair buildings, saving taxpayer money and providing jobs to small businesses.

### Key ask

**Work with the House and Senate small business committees on common sense reforms to procurement that will help small firms enter the marketplace.**

## CONCLUSION

Invite the representative to take part in an activity back home—such as visiting a green building, or a transit-oriented development, or an architect's office—that will help reinforce the messages of the agenda. Don't forget to ask which staff member in the representative's home office would be a good point of contact for events.

- Encourage them to call you whenever they have questions or policy ideas on which they are looking for feedback.
- Regardless of their response on any issue, thank them for their time and willingness to listen.



# Join the **AIA** **Advocacy Network** to Strengthen Our Advocacy Message

The AIA's growing network of member-advocates collaborates with local, state, and national components to bring the AIA's Federal Agenda to their peers and districts year-round. The more our agenda is heard, the more congressional successes for architects.

Let's make everyone a messenger.

Learn more about how to join the AIA Advocacy Network at [www.aia.org/advocacy365](http://www.aia.org/advocacy365)

**ArchiPAC**

The American Institute of Architects  
Political Action Committee



## Invest in ArchiPAC

### and Strengthen the AIA's Advocacy Efforts.

AIA members' voluntary **personal donations** go toward supporting candidates that are supportive of the architecture profession.

→ With a total contribution from AIA members of \$157,000, we helped support 74 candidates in the 2012 congressional elections.

Invest in ArchiPAC and invest in architects.  
[www.archipac.org](http://www.archipac.org)



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## **CONTACT US**

Do you have a question for the AIA Advocacy staff?  
We're here to help.

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