

**Legislative Visit Packet**

Now that August Recess is in full swing, voters have an opportunity to meet with their elected officials and review important issues that affect all of our families. The Campaign for Community Change has partnered with the National Manufactured Home Owners Association to encourage manufactured home owners to visit with their Members of Congress around retirement security issues, namely protecting and strengthening our nation’s Social Security system and ensuring that families are provided access to affordable and quality housing.

In this packet and attached to this email, you will find:

* Tips and pointers on a successful legislative visit
* Fact Sheets on Retirement Security Issues (Attached to Email)
* Congressional tracking sheet
* For an overview on the work, please visit and familiarize yourself by visiting: [www.mhaction.org](http://www.mhaction.org) and [www.retirementsecurityvoices.org](http://www.retirementsecurityvoices.org)

**Goals of the Visits:**

1. **Educate Members of Congress on needed improvements for our nation’s Social Security program.**

Many Americans depend on Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. We need to strengthen and improve those programs, not cut or destroy them, so that America’s seniors can continue to thrive. Instead of instituting harmful policies, like the Chained-CPI (explained in this handout: <http://gvfrs.retirementsecurityvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Chained_CPI_Fact_Sheet_FINAL_Feb-2013_0.pdf>) and raising the retirement age, we need to invest in this program by improving benefits to reflect the true cost of living (CPI – E) and scrapping the cap in order to strengthen Social Security for future generations. Fact sheets explaining those needed improvements issue are included in this email.

1. **Educate Members of Congress around the need for Equity Lifestyle Properties to improve its business practices.**

We’ve heard from thousands of homeowners across the country that are now facing economic peril due to ELS’s unfair and unreasonably rent increases and the lack of attention by ELS towards needed community infrastructure improvements.  ELS currently operates 380 communities in 32 states that directly impact 141,000 manufactured home owners. We are asking Members of Congress to contact ELS and join with us to ask ELS to :

1. Develop a fair and reasonable space rent system, a clear capital expenditure and community infrastructure improvement program, and a written organizational policy and procedure that is designed to treat homeowners/renters with dignity and respect;
2. Take a public stance on improvements to our nation’s retirement security system, namely Social Security and Medicare, so that homeowners that live in ELS communities can guaranteed a secure retirement;



**Tips for Successful Legislative Visits**

* **Have a well-organized team**: Clearly assign a legislative visit chair, leaders to give personal testimonies on our issues, and someone to take notes.
* **Stay on message**: In order to realize the full impact bringing so many leaders to Congress, we need to leave behind the sense that “we’re all in it together and saying the same thing.”
* **Focus on the bullet points**: The facts sheets below have a lot of facts and figures, leave them behind after your visit and focus on the overview bullet points while you are speaking with the staff.
* **Opportunity for follow up**: If you don’t have an answer to a question during the meeting, don’t make one up. Instead, use it as an opportunity to follow up with the staffer once you’ve found or confirmed the answer.
* **Keep the big picture in mind**: Our organizational power rests on the collective shoulders of our grassroots presence at home, and our democracy works when we show up and participate. Have a great time and create opportunities to build relationships with one another and the staff during your visit.



**Sample Lobby Visit**

**Introduction**

* State your name, where you are from, and provide some info on your org

**Share Why You Are There**

* State the issue(s) you came to discuss (include **values** statement)

**Share Your Personal Story**

* Discuss the **Problem** in greater detail through your personal story

**Provide a Possible Solution**

* Present a positive **Solution** to the problem

**Make a Concrete Ask**

* Make a request and suggest an **Action**
* Create Opportunities for Follow-Up

**Adjourn the Meeting**

* Thank the person for the visit
* Collect business card
* Leave meeting together

**Remember Your Goals**

* Educate members on our issues
* Gain Intelligence on each Congress persons priorities

**Lobbying Tips**

* Relax and Have fun!
* Stay on Message
* Prioritize issues
* Be concise, polite and honest (if you don’t know, say so, it provides an opportunity for follow-up)
* Remain in control of the meeting
* Anticipate questions and rebuttals
* Always make a concrete ask and get a commitment
* Leave behind materials
* Take their business card
* Be sure to follow through on follow-up



**Tracking Legislative Visits**

**(please fill out and email to:** **kborden@communitychange.org****)**

Congressperson: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Dist: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Legislative Staff:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Visit Team members: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Which issues did you cover with the Congressional staff?

Did you make any specific asks?

Did the Congress member or their staff make any commitments?

Is there any follow up that needs to happen?