



ACTION ALERT: THE MEMBER CHALLENGE

A handful of elected officials has launched an assault on corporate meetings and events in an effort to attract media attention and score political points. Their overheated rhetoric is leading companies across the country to cancel meetings and events and is placing your destinations and local workers at risk. Companies that have received taxpayer assistance must act responsibly. So too should members of Congress.

You Can Help!

The U.S Travel Association's [Meetings Mean Business](#) campaign is designed to:

- Urge the Department of the Treasury to swiftly enact clear and sensible meetings and events guidelines for companies receiving taxpayer assistance;
- Defeat punitive legislation designed to unreasonably restrict corporate meetings and events;
- Encourage members of Congress to tone down their criticism of meetings and events and embrace travel as a solution to America's economic woes; and
- Inform the media about the benefits of meetings and events and the unintended victims of sensational and uninformed criticism.

By using the tools contained in this plan and on our **Meetings Mean Business** website (www.meetingsmeanbusiness.com), you, your members and the members of your community can help achieve these objectives.

We are asking local convention and visitor bureaus to serve as the on-the-ground generals in this critical campaign. We need you to build a local team and inform Congress and media about the vital role of meetings and events to our economy. Specific activities you should pursue include:

1. **Build Local "Meetings Mean Business Coalitions"** – Assemble at least 25 business leaders, local government officials and labor leaders in your community to gather anecdotes and data about the importance of meetings and events to your community.
2. **Engage Coalition Leaders to Collectively Contact Your Entire Congressional Delegation** – Co-sign a letter with your local coalition and send it to every Member of your congressional delegation. Identify your Members' contact information by clicking [here](#). Please send copies of your letters to grassroots@ustravel.org.

- 3. Generate 1,000 Letters to Senators and Representatives** – Your local coalition and its supporters should send at least 1,000 letters to your congressional delegation. By way of the [Meetings Mean Business](#) website, they can e-mail letters to Congress with just a few clicks, or they can click [here](#) for a sample letter. As an industry, let's generate 385,000 letters – that's just 5 percent of the nation's 7.7 million American travel and tourism workers.
- 4. Educate the 7.7 Million Americans Employed in Travel and Tourism** – Challenge your coalition members to call employee meetings to educate them and mobilize them as grassroots advocates. Click [here](#) for a one-pager detailing the negative effects on labor.
- 5. Generate 500 Calls to Senators and Representatives** - Organize a phone blitz to generate 500 calls from your coalition and its supporters to your congressional delegation. Click [here](#) for talking points.
- 6. Meet with Your Members of Congress at Home** – Act now to schedule an appointment with your congressional delegation when they are home for the April 6-17 recess period.
- 7. Build Teams to Participate in Town Hall Meetings** – Assemble members of your coalition and its supporters to attend town hall meetings when your Members of Congress are home for recess.
- 8. Conduct Editorial Board Briefings with Coalition Leaders and Major Newspapers** – Inform your local media that there is another side to this story, and that is the 2.4 million Americans employed in the meetings and events industry. You should also write letters your editor. Click [here](#) for sample letters.
- 9. Meet with the Publishers of Your Local Newspapers and Business Journals** – Advertise with local papers and business journals. Click [here](#) to see and use our national ad. Ask for advertising space to help spread our important message. Your local newspaper's publisher is a businessperson too. His or her business will also be impacted when hotels, restaurants and other local businesses become targets of the rhetoric.
- 10. Enter the Blogosphere** – Get to know a local blogger. They are increasingly influential in their communities. Comment on their blogs to start shifting the debate and making our story the headline.
- 11. Recruit Five Hourly-Wage Spokespeople** – In order to change the face of this issue, we must take action. It's not the CEOs that impacted by the downturn in meetings and events, but the bellmen, maids, florists, audio-visual technicians, etc. that suffer the consequences. Encourage these workers to talk with media and Members of Congress about the impact on them.

12. Sign Our “Keep America Meeting” Petition – By clicking [here](#), you can sign a petition that will alert the White House, every Member of Congress and Fortune 200 business leaders about the importance of meetings and events. Let’s get 1 million signatures to convey the importance of our cause.

13. Activate Your City Council – Work with members of your city council to pass resolutions that call on Congress to embrace meetings and events.

14. Turn Mayors into Champions – Activate your local coalition and its supporters to write, call and meet with the mayors in your communities. They need to alert Congress to the local pain that is caused by the rhetoric in Washington.

15. Add Your Signature to the CVB Sign-on Letter to Congress – Please contact Dennis Castleman at dcastleman@ustravel.org to join your CVB colleagues in sending a [letter to Congress](#) about the importance of meetings and events to all U.S. destinations.

U.S. Travel Needs You!

U.S. Travel will continue to build our coalition at a national level by engaging partner associations, industry allies and Members of Congress. However, as you know, all politics is local, and no outreach is more important than what you can do at a local level.

Please email U.S. travel at grassroots@ustravel.org with copies of your letters to Congress and with feedback from your legislators and the media. Feel free to contact Melissa Gong (mgong@ustravel.org or 202.408.2137) or Dennis Castleman (dcastleman@ustravel.org or 202.408.2152) at U.S. Travel if you have questions or require assistance. Over the coming days and weeks, we will update you with regular communications about new tools and tactics that we will make available.

By taking action today, you can help tone down the rhetoric and protect the jobs of hardworking Americans and the communities that depend on meetings and events across the United States.

Thank you for your help.

