

A Guide to August Recess

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

In 1970, Congress passed the Legislative Reorganization Act, which stated that unless the U.S. were at war, Congress could take a yearly extended break after July 31. The five-week recess typically begins the first Friday in August and ends the Friday after Labor Day each year.

Members take advantage of this recess period to campaign, visit their home offices, and hold town halls or meetings with their constituents. While members of Congress are away, their staff are often still in DC continuing to work on issues important to their constituents and preparing for legislative activity in September.



THE HOME-FIELD ADVANTAGE

If we don't tell our story, someone else will, and while members of Congress are on your turf, you have the advantage. Seize the opportunity. Here are some ways you can connect:

- **Schedule a meeting with your elected representatives.** Local offices are much less hectic than those in DC. You may find that meeting your elected representatives in their state or district offices is a more personalized experience.
- **Attend town halls.** Represent your farm and family in a meaningful way by being present at town halls and events held by members of Congress.
- **Invite elected officials to your farm.** There is no better way for your elected representatives to learn about agriculture than to get their hands dirty.

HELPFUL TIPS

Developing a valuable relationship with your congressional representative and their office staff starts with being prepared. Here's a few tips:

- **Determine the objective.** Choose 3-4 areas you want to focus on so that you're not overloading the lawmaker with more information than they can absorb.
- **Connect with staff.** Staff members yield a lot of power and expertise—they are key to getting your point across and connecting with Members.
- **Follow-up.** Members of Congress and their staff meet with dozens of groups and individuals. Stand out and become a reliable source by providing timely follow-up.
- **Tout it.** It's the nature of the beast: Members of Congress like attention. Post pictures on social media or share them with the local paper. They will be grateful, and the publicity can help foster a long-term relationship.