Advocacy Day:
Information for First-Time Attendees

February 2019
Roadmap

- Contextualizing fly-in advocacy
- Learn about members of Congress and staff
- Quick review of the legislative process
- Before, during and after Hill meetings
- Finding your way around Capitol Hill
How does constituent advocacy in Washington work?

Congress and the White House create laws and regulations to govern citizens

Citizens influence governing behavior by participating in advocacy efforts

What are fly-ins?

During fly-ins, organizations **host constituents from around the country** in the nation’s capital to advocate for common interests and goals

Sources: National Journal research, 2019; “Communicating with Congress,” Congressional Management Foundation, 2011
Members of Congress want to hear from you

- Constituent conversations guide policymaking
- Reelection hinges on their ability to serve the constituents who vote them into office
- Members trust their staff to help them listen to constituents, so advocates should not be surprised if they meet with staff in lieu of a member

...and find personal communications persuasive...

- Individual letters and e-mails can have greater influence on member decision-making than form letters
- Advocates should focus on sending more personal messages to their member of Congress to capture their individual voice or perspective

...but visitors with first-hand knowledge of policy impacts are most compelling

Influence of advocacy strategies directed at a member’s DC office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>A lot of positive influence</th>
<th>Some influence</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-person issue visits from constituents</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact from constituents’ reps</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualized email messages</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualized postal letters</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local editorial referencing issue...</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments during a telephone town hall</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
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Success in the advocacy space can take time as legislation can slowly move through Congress. Only 6% of bills introduced made it to the floor of either the House or Senate, a marker that the bill underwent serious deliberation.
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Hill staffers significantly outnumber members of Congress

Members and staff of Congress
AS OF 2015

- Members
- Congressional Committee Staff
- Personal Office Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>House</th>
<th>Senate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>435</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>1,164</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>3,917</td>
<td>951</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expect to speak to staffers during meetings on the Hill

Sample organizational structure of a congressional office

- Member of Congress
  - Chief of staff
    - Policy staff
      - Legislative director/counsel
      - Legislative aide
    - Communications staff
      - Communications director
      - Legislative correspondent
    - Office staff
      - Personal assistant/scheduler
      - Staff assistant
    - District staff
      - District director
      - District caseworkers

Members of Congress have busy schedules – staffers will often have more time to devote to Hill meetings and be more capable of affecting any takeaway.

Staffers tend to have more time to meet with constituents than members of Congress

**Member of Congress**
Members tend to be highly overscheduled; they average 70-hour weeks in D.C., often achieved by double-booking meetings.

**Chief of staff**
Visitors may not realize how often chiefs are in communication with a Member; the tight bond means that chiefs are often delegated to speak for the Member to constituents.

**Legislative director**
LDs tend to be specialists in the policies of the committees on which the Member serves; they may focus less on other areas.

**Legislative assistant**
LAs tend to be young; their average age is under 29.

**Legislative correspondent/staff assistant**
LCs and SAs tend to be even younger than LAs, often recent college grads.

It is not uncommon for members to show up halfway through a meeting or leave part of the way through.

Meetings are most often scheduled with and run through one or more of these staffers.

LCs/SAs may join in meetings as a junior staffer or note-taker.

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Legislative process: how a bill becomes a law

**Representative**
- Introduces bill in the House

**House committee/subcommittee**
- Bill is debated and amended
- Simple majority needed to proceed

**House floor**
- Bill is debated and amended
- *Speaker must allow a floor vote*
- Simple majority needed to pass

**Final votes/conference committee**
- If both chambers pass an identical bill, the bill is sent directly to the president
- If each chamber passes a similar bill with some differences, a conference committee is formed to reach compromise and combine the bills

**Senator**
- Introduces bill in the Senate

**Senate committee/subcommittee**
- Bill is debated and amended
- Simple majority needed to proceed

**Senate floor**
- Bill is debated and amended
- *3/5 majority needed to end debate*
- Simple majority needed to pass

**President**
- The president can sign bills that have been passed by both chambers into law
- The president can reject a bill with a veto; Congress can override a veto by passing the bill in each chamber with a 2/3 majority

Bills face numerous obstacles to passage in House and Senate

Though the hypothetical bill below begins in the Senate, a bill arising in the House may face the same hurdles.

- The Senate relies on unanimous consent to operate efficiently; therefore, individual Senators have the power to delay or prevent a bill’s passage by creating additional procedural hurdles, including filibusters.
Even after passage, bills may face hurdles

A bill may pass both the House and Senate but still face enormous challenges, either before or after it is formally enacted.

- Even if a bill manages to pass both chambers of Congress, the president can use vetoes, executive orders or signing statements to prevent the bill from being enacted or enforced.
- Opponents of the bill, including those outside of the legislative process, can prevent the law from being enacted by mounting a successful legal challenge.

**Sources:** National Journal research, 2019; The Legislative Process, U.S. House of Representatives.
The Congressional Review Act (CRA) is an oversight tool that Congress may use to overturn a rule issued by a federal agency. The CRA was included as part of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (SBREFA), which was signed into law on March 29, 1996. The CRA requires agencies to report their rulemaking activities to Congress and provides Congress with a special set of procedures under which to consider legislation to overturn those rules.

Overview of the CRA process

1. Agency publishes rule
2. 60-day consideration period opens
3. Joint resolution drafted
4. Full vote in House & Senate
5. President signs or vetoes

Congressional override possible

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The Heart of any Good Policy Story is an Individual

But too many organizations prioritize the issue—or themselves.

Perspectives on Proper Story Focal Points

Personal Arguments Outweigh Economic Ones

“If you can tell a personal story, tie it to an actual human being who is affected by the care—that is an easier way to cut through… it gives the Member a reason to go out there and become a champion.

Those stories give them the one-minutes on the floor or talking points at a press conference. The most effective messages are ones that go beyond economic impact and talk about the impact that they are having on people’s everyday lives. I’m not discounting the economics but the human element is more memorable.”

—Chief of Staff, House

Distinctions between Corporations and People

“We hear all the time that some regulation is going to put a company out of business… Most people in government see corporations as not being people. I think the best way to get to that is to tell a good story, with real information, real facts. Otherwise there are a lot of people in government who don’t ever get past the corporate angle; this isn’t going to hurt that person at all, it’s just going to be the company.”

—Federal Executive, Department of Labor

Start with the End in Mind

“There is a person at the end of the pipeline. There is a human being that is interacting with your product, or service or industry, and you start there. Not at the industry level, not at the lobbyist level. Start at the person level.”

—Brad Fitch, Congressional Management Foundation
Prepping for a face-to-face meeting with a Member of Congress

Prior to meeting a Member of Congress or their staff, evaluate their priorities and any current activities related to your issue. Consider how you might convey the following elements in telling your story, highlighting your personal connection to their office.

1: Geographic connection

Introduce your geographic connection and convey appreciation for their work.

“We appreciate Congressman Smith’s efforts on behalf of families in Rochester and I’d like to share my story, because it illustrates why this issue is so critical now.”

2: Issue connection

Summarize the Member’s connection to the issue in one sentence.

“We know Congressman Smith is a strong supporter of paid family leave, as evidenced in her recent Twitter chat.”

3: Urgency

Provide a one-sentence overview of why the story is important now (i.e., an upcoming vote or current events).

“With the vote coming up, we wanted to make sure you had stories that demonstrate just how important her position on the issue is.”

4: Additional details

Share your story and call-to-action, offering access to more information as appropriate.

“While I’m here to talk about my experience, there are more at www.strongfamilies.org... We hope our stories and data can assist Congressman Smith in the debate.”

5: Future contact

Reference any upcoming outreach that will be taking place between your counterparts.

“Our senior legislative director plans to connect with [name] to share more details about this campaign.”

Prepping for a face-to-face meeting with a Member of Congress

Advocates can leverage face-to-face meetings with members of Congress and their staff to communicate their positions and build enduring relationships with their representatives. However, meetings are brief and members are busy; advocates should keep the tips below in mind to get the most of their meetings.

1: Be on time
- Arrive no more than 5 minutes before the meeting; Hill offices are too small to accommodate lingering people, and Members are rarely available to meet earlier.
- Inform the scheduler if you are going to be late in case another meeting time must be arranged.

2: Be flexible
- Prepare to meet with either the Member or the member’s staff; treat both with equal respect.
- If the Member arrives in the middle of your meeting, continue as usual; the Member will ask questions if needed.

3: Stay on topic
- Raise only the issue you scheduled to discuss with the Member and/or the Member’s staff to keep the meeting focused and persuasive.

4: Keep politics out of it
- Do not discuss elections or campaign support in your meeting; it intimates that the Member is “for sale.”
- Respect the Member’s political views and relationships outside of the issue at hand.

5: Leave behind brief information
- Leave behind a 1-2 page briefing with data points on the issue discussed with the Member’s office.
- The document should serve as a helpful resource for staff as the issue moves through Congress.

Prepping for a face-to-face meeting with a Member of Congress

At the start of an advocacy campaign, momentum typically increases steadily, but many campaigns lose advocacy momentum and drop to previous engagement levels after the campaign ends. **Ideally, an organization would maintain momentum to ensure continuous engagement with advocacy efforts.**

Advocacy activity level over time (illustrative)
Prepping for a face-to-face meeting with a Member of Congress

Advocates can become trusted resources for lawmakers and their staff by following up and keeping in touch with them after face-to-face meetings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Send a thank you message and valuable information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Send a brief follow-up e-mail after meeting with the Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Thank the Member and/or staffer for their time</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Add a reminder of the meeting topic for the office’s reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Include information from a reliable source to keep the office aware of your issue</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attend events in the district</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Attend town hall meetings or other public events in your district to increase visibility with your Member of Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Find opportunities to engage in policy matters in the district—including building relationships with district staff—to serve as trustworthy resource on your issue</td>
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<tr>
<th>Stay in touch</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Do not over-communicate with Members, but do pass along new information about your issue as it is released</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communicate with your representative—and their staff—in a respectful and informative manner to gain their respect for you and your points of view</td>
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Capitol Hill is a (relatively) small neighborhood

Getting to the Hill

By car
- Capitol Hill offers few public parking options; street parking is difficult
- The nearest garage is north of the Capitol, by Union Station
- Many visitors prefer to arrive by taxi or ridesharing service, available throughout the city
- Two of the most popular ridesharing services are Uber and Lyft, both available for download
  as phone applications

By public transportation
- For most visitors, the Metro system will prove the best transportation bet
- The Red Line (subway) serves the north side of the Capitol, while the Blue, Orange, and Silver
  lines offer two stations to the south
- The Metrobus serves various points around the Hill; visit WMATA.com to see detailed maps

By foot
- DC is a relatively walkable city
- However, hot and humid weather may make long walks inadvisable during the summer
- Bring an extra pair of shoes, bottle of water, and an umbrella to walk around the area
  comfortably

House and Senate buildings sit on opposite sides of the Capitol building.

Map of House and Senate office buildings

Key Hill addresses are simple and formulaic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capitol Hill addresses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>House side</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longworth House Office Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannon House Office Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitol South Metro</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The geography of the House side

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Rayburn (RHOB)</th>
<th>Longworth (LHOB)</th>
<th>Cannon (CHOB)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Numbering</td>
<td>All rooms are four digits; the first is always 2, the second indicates floor</td>
<td>All rooms are four digits; the first is always 1, the second indicates floor</td>
<td>All rooms are three digits; the first indicates floor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inside the House office buildings

Location and floor plan of the House office buildings

Public, handicapped accessible entrance

The geography of the Senate side


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Russell (SR)</th>
<th>Dirksen (SD)</th>
<th>Hart (SH)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Numbering system</td>
<td>All rooms are three digits, the first digit indicating floor number and a prefix indicating office building</td>
<td>Sen. Chuck Schumer’s office, SH 322, is located on the third floor of the Hart building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
Inside the Senate office buildings

Location and floor plan of the Senate office buildings

The mission of the Federal Bar Association is to strengthen the federal legal system and administration of justice by serving the interests and the needs of the federal practitioner, both public and private, the federal judiciary and the public they serve.

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