Capitol Hill 101—Government Relations Issue Briefing and Hill Visits Review

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Presenters:

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Public Interest Advocacy

- Applying psychology to the fundamental problems of human welfare and social justice and the promotion of equitable and just treatment of all segments of society through education, training and public policy.

- Issue areas include:
  - Aging
  - Children, Youth, and Families
  - Criminal and Juvenile Justice
  - Disabilities
  - Ethnic Minorities
  - Gun Violence Prevention
  - Health Disparities
  - HIV/AIDS
  - Human and Civil Rights
  - Immigration
  - Interpersonal Violence
  - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues
  - Native American Issues
  - Poverty and Income Inequality
  - Suicide Prevention
  - Women’s Issues
Practice Advocacy

- Advocating to advance and protect the professional practice of psychology and the economic interests of practicing psychologists through lobbying, grassroots, organizing and political action.

- Priority bills and issue areas include:
  - Medicare Mental Health Access Act (H.R. 884)
  - Mental Health Telemedicine Expansion Act (H.R. 1301)
  - Health Care/Health Insurance Reform, Mental Health Parity, Medicaid, Integrated Care
  - Medicare Coverage & Reimbursement
  - Military & Veterans Affairs
  - Opioids
  - Behavioral Health IT/Privacy
  - Clinical and Quality Programs
Science GRO works to:

• Increase and protect federal **funding** for psychological research.

• Strengthen the **infrastructure** that supports psychological science.

• **Inform** policymakers about psychological research findings that are relevant to federal policy development.

• Increase the ability of scientific psychologists to for their field.
Education Advocacy Goals

- Increase federal support for psychology education and training
- Promote the application of psychology to education (teaching and learning)

Appropriations for FY20:
- Funding for the Graduate Psychology Education (GPE) Program
- Funding for the Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training Program
- National Health Service Corps & Substance Use Disorder Loan Repayment Program
- Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants

Authorizations:
- Higher Education Act Reauthorization
- Health Workforce Programs Reauthorization
Relax! They want you to like them.
Typical D.C. Office Structure...

- **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

Sources:
- National Journal research, 2019
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

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

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

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

Lots of Ground to Cover: Issue Responsibilities for LA’s and LD’s

**Legislative Director**

**Legislative Assistant**
- Campaign Finance, Education, Foreign Affairs, Housing, Human Rights, Judiciary, Military, Trade, Transportation, Veterans

**Legislative Assistant**
- Agriculture, Budget, Energy, Environment, Finance, Immigration, Native Americans, Tax, Telecommunications
When meeting with constituents as part of an organized fly-in, how helpful are the following?

- **Leave behind 1-2 page issue summary**
  - Very/ Somewhat Helpful: 94%
  - Not Very Helpful: 6%

- **Follow-up email with attachments of material**
  - Very/ Somewhat Helpful: 86%
  - Not Very Helpful: 14%

- **Leave behind 5 page or greater length research report**
  - Very/ Somewhat Helpful: 82%
  - Not Very Helpful: 18%

*source: Congressional Management Foundation*
Congressional Staff: They’re Almost All New

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years in Current Position</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26+</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 25</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 5</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 to 2</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: Congressional Management Foundation
Survey Question

Our office would prefer to receive a request for a meeting with the Member from the following individual:
House Chiefs of Staff
Constituent or Washington Representative?

- A Washington Representative: 7%
- A Constituent: 29%
- No Preference: 29%

Copyright 2015, Congressional Management Foundation
Lobbying visits are simple!

1. Enter the office and introduce yourself to the receptionist. Tell the receptionist who you have an appointment with.

2. When the staff person comes out, introduce yourself, make small talk, ask if they’re from the state, etc.

3. **Make the “ask”:** Run through your issues, making it clear what you want their boss to do. Stay focused on your issues, and whenever possible, ask for concrete, specific action.

4. Ask if you can follow up with the staff person in ~2 weeks.

You won’t be expected to know all the answers! If you’re asked something you don’t know, just say “I don’t know, I’ll check and get back to you.”
Rule #1
Learn the Legislator’s Position BEFORE You Contact

source: Congressional Management Foundation
What do They Think About the Following as Part of an Organized Fly-in or Lobby Day?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Helpfulness</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal story related to the bill or issue</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constituent's reasoning for supporting or opposing the bill or issue</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The impact of the bill or issue on the district or state</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

source: Congressional Management Foundation
When Meeting With a MoC or Staffer, Remember...

- **Decide ahead of time who’s going to say what!** (Who’s going to cover which issues/points, who’s going to talk first, etc.)

- Be prepared to complete your meeting—including making your key points and saying what you want the legislator to do within **15 - 20 minutes**.

- When the meeting is over, thank them for their time, and get their **business card** so you can contact them again from back home.
“One of the biggest mistakes is not customizing their pitch to our office. We’re a conservative Republican office so the arguments should be adjusted to appeal to that philosophical view.”

Staff quote from Congressional Management Foundation survey
More Meeting tips

• Silence or turn off cell phones

• Properly address the member of Congress (“Congressman/woman”, “Senator”)

• Be nice. Believe it or not, they’re trying to make the world a better place

• **Follow up!** This is just one point in the process
Visiting or Contacting Your Legislator is Like Playing Golf...

Your initial contact probably won’t get you a clear answer, so keep swinging
House and Senate buildings sit on opposite sides of the Capitol building

Map of House and Senate office buildings

## Senate Offices:

### 1st Digit of Room Number = Floor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dirksen</th>
<th>Russell</th>
<th>Hart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• SD 246 = Dirksen Senate Office Building, office on 2nd floor</td>
<td>• SR G22 = Russell Senate Office Building, office on ground floor</td>
<td>• SH B22 = Hart Senate Office Building, office on basement level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## House Offices: Not So Simple

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cannon</th>
<th>Longworth</th>
<th>Rayburn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All 3 digit room numbers are in the CANNON BUILDING; first digit is the floor.</td>
<td>All room numbers in the 1000’s are in the LONGWORTH BUILDING; second digit is the floor.</td>
<td>All numbers in the 2000’s are in the RAYBURN BUILDING; second digit is the floor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example: “415 Cannon” (CHOB) = office on the 4th floor.</td>
<td>Example: “1320 Longworth” = office on 3rd floor</td>
<td>Example: “2159 Rayburn” = office located on the 1st floor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Coffee!

Basement (B) level of buildings
How do Congressional Offices Rate Follow-up Activities?

- Email to the LA with issue jurisdiction: 90%
- Phone call to the LA with issue jurisdiction: 90%
- Email to the Chief of Staff: 65%
- Email to district/state director: 52%
- Phone call to the Chief of Staff: 50%
- Phone call to district/state director: 39%
Visiting or Contacting Your Legislator Is Like a Cross-Country Car Trip

There’s no Constitutional limit on the number of times you can ask a member of Congress to do something
APA Practice Organization Legislative Action Center

Welcome and thank you for sharing your training and expertise and making your voice heard to Members of Congress and the Administration on issues critical to your patients and profession.

Please take action on the important federal issues highlighted below. You may also take action on important state issues by selecting your state or territory in the "State Elected Officials" box.

Take Action!

- The Medicare Mental Health Access Act
  Tell Congress to allow psychologists to provide Medicare services to patients without unnecessary physician supervision!

- Comprehensive Mental Health Legislation Introduced in Congress
  Write to Congress Today!

Find Your Elected Officials

Elected Officials
"These are the people we elected and if we are not satisfied we should get new candidates. It is in our hands. It is our country. It is a very simplistic view that politicians are to blame for everything."

-Robert Stanfield, former Conservative Leader and Premier of Nova Scotia

"The job of a citizen is to keep his mouth open."

-Gunther Grass
If you need additional assistance, or have questions:

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or call: 202-336-5889