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

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Presenters:
Laurel Stine, J.D.
Director of Congressional Affairs

Scott Barstow, MS,
Director of Congressional Affairs

2017 PRACTICE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
Relax! They want you to like them.
Typical D.C. Office Structure...

- REPRESENTATIVE
  - Chief of Staff
    - Legislative Director (LD)
      - Legislative Assistant (LA)
      - Legislative Assistant (LA)
    - Legislative Correspondent (LC)
  - Communications Director
  - Scheduler
  - Staff Assistant
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: 6%
  - Not Very Helpful: 94%

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

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

Source: Congressional Management Foundation
Congressional Staff: They’re Almost All New

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years in Current Position</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<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>
</tbody>
</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: 64%
- No Preference: 29%
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>Topic</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Helpfulness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal story related to the bill or issue</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constituent's reasoning for supporting or opposing the bill or issue</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The impact of the bill or issue on the district or state</td>
<td>88%</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

Data from www.voteview.org, affiliated with the Dept. of Political Science at the University of Georgia
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...
### Senate Offices:
1st Digit of Room Number = Floor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dirksen</td>
<td>SD 246</td>
<td>Dirksen Senate Office Building, office on 2\textsuperscript{nd} floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell</td>
<td>SR G22</td>
<td>Russell Senate Office Building, office on ground floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hart</td>
<td>SH B22</td>
<td>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
Laurel Stine – lstine@apa.org
Scott Barstow – sbarstow@apa.org
main phone #: 202-336-5889
"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