



# 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Education Advocacy Summit: *Effective Hill Visits*

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# Effective Hill Visits: Getting Ready

- Why Advocacy Matters
- Congress 101: Know Your Audience
- Hill Meeting Tips
- Questions

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# Why Advocacy Matters

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## Have you ever...

- Written or emailed a Member of Congress to share your views?
- Visited or called a Member of Congress?
- Written to the media about a topic important to you?
- Received a response?



# Who Am I to Lobby Congress?

- The Constitution grants you the right “to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”
- Congress “plays” health professional – you are the expert
- They work for YOU!



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## Constituent Communications

- 48 percent believe the Internet and e-mails from constituents have made lawmakers more responsive to their voters
- Almost all Congressional staff “prize” missives written by individuals over generic messages
- Almost all Congressional offices tally and take note of the vast majority of electronic messages they receive, even if they are “mass produced”
- Personal visits matter!

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# Congress 101: Know Your Audience

## HOUSE

- 435
- Population-Based
- 2 Year Term
- Local District
- Republicans in Control, 232-200 (3 Vacancies)



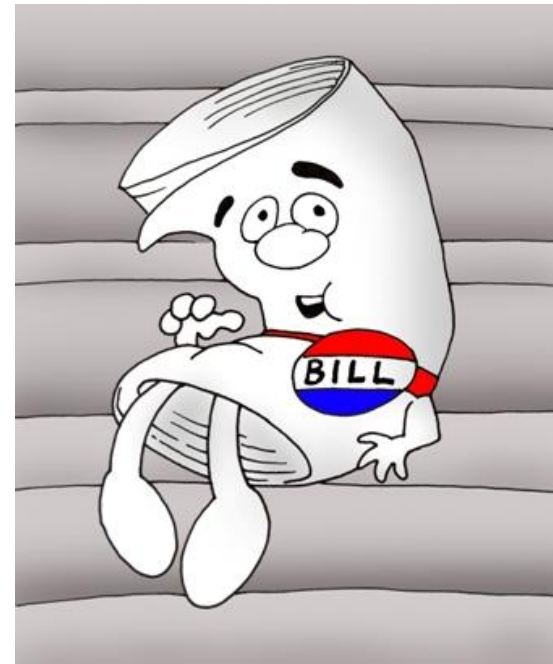
## SENATE

- 100
- 2 per state
- 6 Year Term, 1/3 Every 2 Years
- Entire State
- Democrats in Control, 53-45-2



# Legislative Process

- Bill Introduced (#)
  - Reference to Committee
  - Reference to Subcommittee
  - Mark-up in Subcommittee and Full Committee
    - Reported Out Favorably
  - Full (House/Senate) Chamber
    - Repeat in Other Chamber
- If they differ, then ....**



**Conference Committee to Negotiate Differences**

**President – Enacts or Vetoes**

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# Hill Meeting Tips

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## Capitol Hill: The Real Deal

- Congress Legislates by Anecdote
  - *Compelling stories prompt action*
- Members Need to “Hear from Home”
  - *Constituents have an impact*
- Congress is Run by Young People
  - *Young staffers have power and influence, but need your expertise*

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## Capitol Hill Visits: Top 10 Tips

1. **Be organized** – arrange speaking roles ahead of time
2. **Manage the time** – ask how much time the staffer has and if he or she has a connection to healthcare; thank them upfront for taking the time to meet
3. **Be brief and clear** – summarize your requests first in case the meeting is cut short
4. **Listen carefully, and be courteous** – anticipate questions and do your best to provide clear answers

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## Capitol Hill Visits: Top 10 Tips

5. Include personal examples and relevant local data and experiences, explain how the issue(s) impact your community/state
6. Discuss outcomes/ consequences of taking or not taking action; no need to be threatening, but give a clear sense of the benefit of the policymaker doing what you are requesting



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## Capitol Hill Visits: Top 10 Tips

7. Get a commitment for a day you can follow-up on your requests, and ask for his/her preferred mode of communication
8. At the close of the meeting, be sure to leave your packet of materials, your contact information, and summarize your requests
9. Offer to be a resource, express thanks and appreciation
10. Be sure to get the staffer's card and follow up with a thank you letter and call – be polite and persistent!

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## What to Expect on the Hill

- Meeting space is tight – you could meet with staff in the hallway, or be asked to go down to the cafeteria
- There will be very little time for the meeting – it's important to get your key points out early and often
- Staffers are young and may have little knowledge of health care – be patient and prepared to give them a brief “101”
- Don't forget to hand over your meeting packets

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## Who's Who: Congressional Staff

- Chief of Staff (CoS) – the most senior staffer in the office
- Legislative Director (LD) – the second most senior staffer in the office, responsible for overseeing all legislative work in the offices
- Health Legislative Assistant (LA) – responsible for health care issues, typically who you will meet with
- Legislative Correspondent (LC)/Staff Assistant – a junior staffer responsible for answering constituent correspondence (mainly Senate side)



# Hill Survival Tactics

- Have the office phone number handy in case you are running late or need to cancel
- If you are attending a meeting with your colleagues and you are running late, call someone on the team
- If you are the only person attending a meeting and for some reason you need to cancel the appointment, call the office



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## More Capitol Hill Survival Tactics

- If lost, ask a Capitol Police officer for directions
- Leave time to go through security; just like the airport, you cannot bring any sharp objects or aerosol sprays
- Be flexible and understanding if the staff or Member rush the meeting, cancel, or if you wind up meeting with someone else – it's not personal, it's the reality of a busy Congressional office

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## After Your Capitol Hill Meetings

- As soon as possible, be sure to follow up after your meetings with an e-mailed thank you letter to the staffer
- Include any information you promised to provide; if you cannot provide it at the time of sending your thank you, indicate that you will follow up with what you promised to provide
- A week or so after you send your thank you message, call the staffer to ensure it was received and to follow up on your requests

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# Questions?



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# Thank You

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