Advocacy 101

An informational guide for fly-in and virtual advocacy measures when interacting with government officials

This is an abridged version of the full 36 slide deck. Go here to request the full deck.

November 30, 2022
Roadmap

- Contextualizing fly-in advocacy
  - Members of Congress and their staff
  - Legislative processes
  - Capitol Hill: Before, during and after
  - Navigating Capitol Hill
How does constituent advocacy in Washington work?

**GOVERNMENT ROLE**

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

**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.

**CONSTITUENT ROLE**

Citizens influence governing behavior by participating in advocacy efforts:

- Showing support
- Asking for change
- Telling stories
- Sharing ideas
- Providing information

**SOURCE**

National Journal research, Congressional Management Foundation.
Members of Congress want to hear from you

**CONSTITUENT CONTACT**

Members of Congress value staying in touch with constituents

- Conversations guide policymaking
- Reelections hinge on lawmakers’ ability to serve their constituents
- Members trust staff to help them listen to constituents
- Advocates should not be surprised if they meet with staff in lieu of a lawmaker

**PERSONALIZED MESSAGING**

Individualized communications are highly persuasive

- Personalized letters and e-mails can have more influence on members’ decisions than form letters
- Advocates should focus on sending more personal messages to capture individual voice or perspective

**ON-THE-GROUND INTELLIGENCE**

First-hand knowledge of policy impacts are most compelling

- What policy actions do constituents desire?
- Why do constituents prioritize that action?
- What are the impacts of this on our district or state?
- What personal stories connect to this policy?

**SOURCE** National Journal research, Congressional Management Foundation.
Home advantage in congressional decision-making
Constituent views and personalized outreach are most influential

Influence of Advocacy Strategies Directed at a Member’s Washington Office

- In-person issue visits from constituents: 94%
- Contact from constituents' reps: 94%
- Individualized email messages: 92%
- Individualized postal letters: 88%
- Comments during a telephone town hall: 87%
- Local editorial referencing issue: 87%

*Asked of Chiefs of Staff, Communications Directors, Legislative Directors, Legislative Assistants

SOURCE National Journal research, Congressional Management Foundation.
Success in the advocacy space can take time

Legislation moves slowly through Congress

Bills and resolutions by status

Only 5-6% of bills make it to the House or Senate floor

Enacted laws  Passed resolutions  Got a vote  Failed Legislation  Other Legislation

116th Congress (2019-21)  117th Congress (2021-23)

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213  710  685  15,524
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