



COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY PRESIDENTS SCIENCEPRESIDENTS.ORG

Advocacy for Science 101: A Council of Scientific Society Presidents Primer for Visiting The Hill

OBJECTIVE:

To underscore the long-term importance of science, engineering and technology that support the nation's global growth and competitiveness.

CORE MESSAGES:

Balanced Federal investment in science, engineering and technology (SET) is fundamental to the future of our nation's prosperity. Effective competitiveness and innovation policies will sustain U.S. technological leadership with an interest in societal impact to encourage the development of a skilled, creative and competitive workforce.

PREPARATION:

Senators and Representatives are NOT elected to represent the U.S. They are elected to represent their individual congressional districts or states.

- They are often referred to as members of Congress.
- The most visible and important name is on the door.
- Be familiar with details about Congressional staff which can be found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Congressional_staff or here <https://www.cof.org/content/roles-congressional-staff-members>.

IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS:

- Relationships with district (local) or DC staff are critical.
- Develop relationships with staff at every level. They are gatekeepers to the Member's calendar and provide decision making information.

SCHEDULING:

Local Events

- Invite the member and district office staff to any local events – new labs, research releases, tours, etc.
- District staff can assist with any local scheduling needs.

Congressional Office Visits

- Scheduling is subject to availability. It is recommended that you request an appointment 1-2 weeks in advance. Meetings average between 15-20 minutes.
- With whom will you meet?

- You will most likely meet with staff as Member's availability is not known in advance.
- Senators' staff is comprised of approximately 40 people, plus interns and fellows.
- Representatives' staff is comprised of approximately 20 people with approximately two thirds located in DC and one third located in their district.
- Congressional staff tend to be young and early in their career.
- Typical staff have limited discipline specific scientific background.

DOCUMENTS TO BRING:

- One-pager about the issue(s) you plan to discuss, including societal impacts, along with your society's role in this issue. A call to action; what do you hope to achieve in this meeting?
- The more concise you are, the greater opportunity for success. Keep it simple, avoiding too much scientific terminology
- Invitations to upcoming local events or tours to upcoming new labs for which Federal funding has been received
- If multiple attendees, consider a short document with all bios. Don't read it aloud.

WHAT TO DO:

- Say thank you first.
- The time you have is valuable. Use it wisely.
- Make very short introductions, then state your ask/issue succinctly.
- Consider sharing a short document with all attendees' bios. Don't read it out loud.

HOW TO INFLUENCE CONGRESS?

- Visit or call; Don't write individually unless you have a connection that will get your correspondence directly to a topical staffer.
- Get to know a member of Congress personally
 - Make a personal connection to a staffer
 - Build long term relationships!
- Staffers need information that is quick, actionable, and specific.
- Academic papers will be more detailed than a staffer needs.

Follow up with a Thank You!

