NARFE Legislative Conference

Lobby Day 101

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Lobby Day 101

How to effectively meet with Members of Congress and their staff during NARFE’s lobby day by:

- Understanding Congress
- Understanding your members of Congress
- Being aware of fiscal and political realities
- Being organized and informed before the meeting starts
Understanding Congress

Republicans Won a Record Majority in the House

Control of the 114th House (2014-2016)

Total Seats
Democrats: 188
Republicans: 247

- Democratic
- Republican
Republicans Won a Slim Majority in the Senate

Control of the 114th Senate (2014-2016)
Understanding Your Members of Congress

Committee Assignments Highlight Priorities

Key NARFE Committees:
- House and Senate Budget
- House Oversight and Government Reform / Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
- House Ways and Means / Senate Finance

Leadership Positions Provide Opportunity to Influence Others:
- Speaker of the House
- Majority/Minority Leaders
- Majority/Minority Whips

Other Affiliations of Note:
- Republican Study Committee
- House Progressive Caucus
Understanding *Your* Members of Congress

How long has your member of Congress been in Congress?

- Longer serving members should already be familiar with NARFE
- Freshman and sophomore members need introduction to NARFE

What will you tell them about NARFE?

**Staff plays a crucial role**

- The 535 members of Congress are supported by over 13,000 staffers
- The most trusted and effective aides of the most senior members may be extremely influential in their own right, and as a conduit to their member
  - Advise members how to vote
Understanding *Your* Members of Congress

Congressional Staff

Members and Staff of Congress

- **Members**
- **Congressional Committee Staff**
- **Personal Office Staff**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>House</th>
<th>Senate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>1324</td>
<td>913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6907</td>
<td>3884</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Despite Variable Titles, Most Staffers Have Similar Jobs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title for Personal Office Staffers</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Title for Committee Staffers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief of Staff, Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>Serve as chief advisor and administrator for member or committee</td>
<td>Staff Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative Director, Deputy Chief of Staff, Chief Policy Advisor</td>
<td>Act as chief policy advisor, especially on area of committee jurisdiction</td>
<td>Deputy Staff Director, Chief Policy Advisor, Senior Policy Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsel, Legislative Counsel</td>
<td>Provide legal advice to member or committee</td>
<td>Counsel, Chief Counsel, General Counsel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative Assistant</td>
<td>Offer guidance on specific policy issue</td>
<td>Legislative Assistant, Policy Advisor, Professional Staff Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications Director, Press Secretary</td>
<td>Speak to media on behalf of member or committee</td>
<td>Communications Director, Press Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Manger, Systems Administrator</td>
<td>Oversee management of office and facilities</td>
<td>Office Manger, Systems Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No equivalent</td>
<td>Conduct oversight of government programs within jurisdiction of committee</td>
<td>Investigator, Chief Investigator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative Correspondent</td>
<td>Respond to constituent contacts on behalf of member</td>
<td>No equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Assistant</td>
<td>Answer phones, greet visitors, perform administrative tasks</td>
<td>Staff Assistant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Analysis**

While the structure of a committee is different than that of a personal office, most Congressional staffers exist in a relatively similar hierarchy, whether they work for a committee or a single member.
**Expect to Meet with Staffers During Hill Visits**

**Member of Congress**
Visitors may not realize how highly overscheduled Members are; they average 70-hour weeks when in D.C., often achieved by double-booking meetings.

**Chief of Staff**
Visitors may not expect how often chiefs are in communication with a Member; the tight bond means that chiefs are often delegated to speak for Member to constituents.

**Legislative Director**
Visitors may not expect that LDs tend to be specialists in the policies of the committees on which Member serves; they may focus less on other areas.

**Legislative Assistant**
Visitors may not expect that LAs are very young; their average age is under 29.

**Legislative Correspondent/Staff Assistant**
Visitors may not expect that LCs and SAs tend to be even younger than LAs, often recent college grads.

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**Analysis**
Because members of Congress are often running from meeting to meeting to vote, staffers will often have more time to devote to a meeting, and be more capable of affecting any takeaway.
Political and Fiscal Realities

- House and Senate are more polarized than ever.
- Americans are more polarized in their views than any time in the last 20 years.
- Compromises have become scarcer and more difficult to achieve, contributing to recent Congresses’ inability to get much done.
- However, bipartisanship still necessary to pass major bills.
- Government spending and government size takes priority:
  - Awareness of effects on budget. Cost measures need offsets.
  - References to size of deficit and debt are frequent.
  - How does this change NARFE’s message?
- Sequestration: its impact and varying viewpoints:
  - Defense hawks: offset defense cuts with larger cuts to domestic spending.
- Federal employees and retirees are an easy target.
Meetings with Congressional Offices –
Know Before You Go Checklist

After scheduling a meeting with your legislator’s office, use this checklist to prepare for the meeting and learn more about your legislator’s position on NARFE issues. Most of this information can be found via our Legislative Action Center at www.cqrcengage.com/narfe/home, the state-specific “At a Glance” document or at www.congress.gov. If you need assistance finding the information in this checklist, please contact the NARFE Legislative staff at leg@narfe.org or 703-838-7760.

**District/State Information** (refer to the state-specific At a Glance document)

- How many federal employees and annuitants are in the district? In the state?
Be Organized. Be Informed.

Know Before You Go! In addition to the checklist...

✓ Decide in advance what issues you want to talk about
  ✓ limit it to no more than three
  ✓ base decision on:
    ✓ Political leanings
    ✓ NARFE voting record and previous support/opposition
    ✓ Timing of upcoming issues/legislative action
    ✓ Previous cosponsorships
    ✓ What’s important to you and your chapter/federation

✓ Decide who in your group will talk about each issue

✓ Tell your story. What did you do for the federal government?

✓ Know how legislation would impact you
  ✓ Ex: Chained CPI

✓ Have the state-specific toolkit handy
Be on time
• Arrive no more than 5 minutes before the meeting; Members are rarely available to meet earlier and Hill offices are too small to accommodate lingering constituents
• Inform the Scheduler if you are going to be late in case another meeting time must be arranged

Be flexible
• Prepare to meet with either the Member or the Member’s staff; treat both with equal respect
• If the Member arrives in the middle of your meeting, continue as usual; and the Member will ask questions if needed

Stay on Topic
• Raise only the issue you scheduled to discuss with the Member and the Member's staff to keep the meeting focused and persuasive

Keep Politics Out of It
• Do not discuss elections or campaign support in your meeting; it intimates that the Member is “for sale”
• Respect the Member’s political views and relationships outside of the issue at hand

Leave Behind Brief Information
• Leave behind a 1-2 page briefing with data points on the issue discussed with the Member’s office; the document should serve as a helpful resource for staff as the issue moves through Congress

Quick Takes
• Advocates can leverage face-to-face meetings with Members of Congress and their staff to communicate their positions and build enduring relationships with their representatives
• However, meetings are brief and Members are busy; advocates should keep the tips below in mind to get the most of their meetings

Be Organized. Be Informed.

✓ 94% of House Chiefs of Staff feel a "1-2 page issue summary" left behind after a meeting is somewhat or very helpful

✓ Only 18% said the same of a "5 page or greater length” document.

✓ Materials in your folder:
  ✓ You don’t have to discuss everything
  ✓ Provide handouts when talking about issue.
  ✓ If you don’t talk about a document(s), leave it behind
Be Organized. Be Informed.

Additional Tips:

✓ Focus on NARFE issues
✓ Be polite
✓ Don’t be effusive
✓ Read your audience
✓ Ok to say, I don’t know
✓ Ok to take pictures

✓ DO NOT MENTION NARFE-PAC
Lobby Day 101

Now, let's practice!