

Legislative Handbook

Communicating with Congress
How a Bill Becomes a Law
Resources

U.S. Senate and House Committees: 112th Congress

**Produced by Triangle Coalition for Science and Technology Education and
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"Things don't happen. They are made to happen" - John Fitzgerald Kennedy

Seventeen Cardinal Rules for Working with Congress

The following "Cardinal Rules," are taken from *Working with Congress: A Practical Guide for Scientists and Engineers*, by William G. Wells, Jr.

- ✓ Convey that you understand something about Congress.
- ✓ Demonstrate your grasp of the fundamentals of the Congressional decision-making system.
- ✓ Don't seek support of STEM education as an entitlement.
- ✓ Don't convey negative attitudes about politics and politicians.
- ✓ Perform good intelligence gathering in advance.
- ✓ Always use a systematic checklist.
- ✓ Do your homework on the issue or problem.
- ✓ Timing is vital.
- ✓ Understand Congressional limitations.
- ✓ Make it easy for those in Congress to help you.
- ✓ Keep the "Bottom Line" in mind.
- ✓ Use time—yours and theirs—effectively.
- ✓ Remember that Members and staff are mostly generalists.
- ✓ Don't patronize either Members or staff.
- ✓ Don't underestimate the role of staff in Congress.
- ✓ Consider and offer appropriate follow-up
- ✓ Remember that the great majority of Members and staff are intelligent, hardworking, and dedicated to public service.

Know Your Members of Congress

The first step is to identify your Members of Congress (House Representative and Senators). If you are unsure who they are, go to <http://www.trianglecoalition.org/congress.htm> and choose either the House or Senate lists to search.

Every member of Congress maintains at least one office in his or her home state. These satellite offices are there to provide constituent services. Most representatives and senators make a point of scheduling several days each month for appointments with local constituents. If you would like to make an appointment to share information about an upcoming STEM event, staff at the state or district office are there to assist you. These offices can also assist you if you need information from an agency in Washington, or help in completing a federal grant application.

Communicating With Your Members of Congress

Although your members of Congress maintain offices in their home states, today's heavy congressional work schedule limits the frequent and extended visits that used to keep Members in close touch with their constituents. As a result, letters from home have become the main form of voter contact and the primary source of constituency views. Your representative and senators need and want to hear from you in order to keep informed about what the people back home really care about.

Ten Steps to Composing Persuasive Letters & Faxes

(from American Planning Association website - modified)

- 1. Identify Yourself as a Constituent.**
Put your name and complete address on both the envelope and the letter. Legislators will only feel compelled to respond to constituent mail, so it's important to establish immediately that you live in the district.
- 2. Use Proper Forms of Address.**
Address your lawmaker as "The Honorable." Also, be sure to get their title correct, e.g. Senator, Representative, Assembly member. Use "The Honorable" in the address and the office title in the salutation (Dear Senator Smith). Courtesy is important and will make the legislator or staff more receptive to your message.
- 3. Be Brief and Simple.**
Keep your letter to no more than two pages. Try to stay on one page. In the first paragraph, state your purpose and what you want. Avoid the temptation to be comprehensive in explaining the legislation and making all possible arguments.
- 4. State (and Repeat) Your Position.**
Make your position and/or request clear in both your opening and closing paragraphs. Be specific. State what action you want. If you want to advance a piece of legislation, say so. If you want to know the legislator's stand on an issue, ask what it is. If you want support on a particular issue, request it and a response.
- 5. Personalize Your Message.**
A personal letter is much more effective than a form letter. While form letters, postcards, and petitions are read and counted, they don't carry the weight of a personalized, individual letter. Persuasive constituent mail humanizes issues by placing them in a local, personal context. When sample letters are provided for your use, incorporate your own words and personal perspective into the text.

6. **Be Polite and Avoid Ultimatums or Rudeness.**
Everyone responds better to praise than criticism. Threats and ultimatums do little to convince a legislator to adopt your position. And, if a legislator does take the course of action that you suggest, send them a note of thanks. This will only help build your long-term relationship with the legislator and staff.
7. **Do Not Enclose Additional Material.**
Additional reports or newspaper articles are rarely read or filed. If you have a particularly useful resource, mention it in your letter and offer to provide a copy upon request. Overwhelming an office with paper runs the risk of your letter being discarded along with the offending pile of paper.
8. **Do Not Exaggerate or Lie.**
Stick to your facts and experiences. Stories or facts fabricated to prove your point only run the risk of undermining your credibility. Many legislators and staff become adept at spotting a tall tale.
9. **Make Your Message Timely.**
Don't procrastinate. Your letter is not helpful if it arrives after a vote. Be aware of the legislative process (is the bill in committee or coming up for a vote on the floor) and time your letter accordingly. Since September 11, 2001 all U.S. Mail being sent to Congressional office is processed and treated and can take as much as four weeks to be delivered. Faxes and/or e-mail can allow you to get your letter to a legislator at critical junctures in the process and have become the normal form of communication to Congressional offices as well as Federal Agencies.
10. **Send a Copy of Your Letter to Triangle Coalition/ NSTA/NCTM/ITEA or local organization.**
Knowing that you've contacted a legislator helps your national and/or local organization staff coordinate legislative strategy and additional lobbying. Also, send them a copy of any response you receive.

Find addresses for your representatives in Congress at
www.trianglecoalition.org/congress.htm.

Tips for Sending Effective E-mail to Elected Officials

(from American Planning Association website – modified)

- 1. Put Your Name and Address at the Top of Message.**

The first thing your representative wants to determine is if you live in his or her district. If you don't ... delete. Representatives and staff do not have any obligation and little time to read messages from people who are not constituents, so it is vital that you make it clear that you live in the district.
- 2. Humanize Your Message.**

This is one of the most important things you can do to ensure your e-mail makes an impact. Many people are uncomfortable sharing their feelings or talking about their own experiences, or believe that such information is inappropriate to the legislative process. Yet, it is this information that separates one's message from the standardized, bulk messages drafted by interest groups. These messages are more likely to be read than simply tallied.
- 3. Be Brief.**

Members of Congress and their staff are extremely busy. Respect their time and try to tell them only what they need to know. Two or three paragraphs should be sufficient. Do not feel that you have to make every single argument that relates to the issue, only the strongest points you can make.
- 4. Be Clear About Your Position.**

Your request should be stated as a concrete, actionable item, e.g., "I would like you to support H.R. 100" and include this action in the first line or two of the letter.
- 5. Make Your Message Timely.**

Send your message when the legislation is being considered. Your message is worthless if it arrives after a critical vote.
- 6. Don't "Flame."**

You are allowed to disagree with your member of Congress, but you will not be effective if you abuse or threaten them. Abusive letters seem more desperate than intimidating to the recipient, and they are seldom taken seriously.
- 7. Avoid Attachments.**

Congressional offices rarely print or read attachments to e-mail. Offer to provide supporting documents on request, but avoid sending attached files.

8. Don't Become "Spam."

Do not send Congress a message every single day about every issue you read about or develop an opinion on. An office that receives numerous messages from a single person quickly loses sight of the urgency or expertise that the constituent can bring to a specific issue.

9. Establish Your Credibility.

Explain if you are an expert in some area. Also, do not shy away from saying that you are either a personal supporter or a party supporter (but never imply that because you voted for somebody or contributed money to their campaign that they owe you a vote).

10. Don't Lie.

Political professionals are adept at spotting a tall tale. Any story that sounds too perfect or any statistic that is not substantiated will not bolster your position.

11. Don't cc Everybody.

Resist the urge to send a copy of your message to every member of Congress. You will persuade no one and annoy everybody. A legislative office wants to know that you have appealed to them for specific action, not just sent them a copy of a memo distributed to all.

12. Proofread Your E-mail.

Too often the speed and ease of sending e-mail is reflected in poor grammar and sloppy spelling. Even if a congressional staffer is able to determine your meaning, such errors reflect badly on your overall argument. Take a break before you press "send," and proof your message.

Find addresses for your representatives in Congress at
<http://www.trianglecoalition.org/congress.htm>.

Calling Your Elected Officials

A phone call to a congressional office is an effective way to make your views known when you are interested in an upcoming vote and when your opinion can be concisely stated. It is unlikely you would be able to talk directly with a member, but again, staff are assigned to respond to phone messages and your position is recorded. If you do have an established rapport with a member of Congress so that your call will be put through, use this kind of influence sparingly.

- Preparation. The key to effective telephone calls is in the preparation. Before you lift the receiver, jot down a few talking points--and be prepared to leave a voice mail message if necessary.
- Conversation. When you telephone a legislator's office, ask to speak with the legislative aide responsible for covering education issues. If the aide is not available, leave a clear message, including your name and address, with the person who answers the phone. You might begin by saying, "I'm Jane Educator calling from Anytown, and I'd like to leave a message for Congressperson Smith." State the issue you are calling about and what you want your representative to do. Be as brief as possible, recognizing that legislative offices are very busy.
- Follow-up. Be sure to thank elected officials.
- A follow-up letter is a perfect opportunity to restate your position and include additional materials, such as a position statement or relevant articles.

Tips for Successful Legislative Meetings

(from American Planning Association website - modified)

Meeting in person with elected officials and/or legislative staff is the most effective means of political advocacy. Here are some important "do's" and "don'ts" to ensure that your lobbying meeting is successful and effective.

DO:

Make an appointment in advance.

Time is always at a premium in legislative offices. Contact the legislator's scheduler in advance to arrange a meeting. It is best to make your meeting request in writing and follow up with a phone call. Be clear about who will be attending the meeting and the specific reason for the meeting. Legislative schedules are unpredictable so don't be put off if your meeting is rescheduled or if you have to meet with staff in lieu of the elected official.

Your homework.

Prepare carefully and thoroughly for your meeting. Take the time to "know" your legislator by reviewing past votes or statements on the issue, his/her party's position, and committee assignments. Develop an agenda that all your participants clearly understand. Know your talking points in advance and be prepared to make your case. Research the opposition's arguments against your position and, if possible, acknowledge and rebut those arguments in your presentation.

Stay "on message."

Effective legislative meetings should be narrow in scope. Stick to a single issue, state only a few key points in support of your position and make a definite request for action. Many meetings are ineffective because a participant brings up other issues or strays from the key arguments supporting your position. Have a message and stick to it.

Go local.

Your effectiveness is based on geography. Legislators want to hear your thoughts and opinions because you are a constituent. One of your most useful strategies is to relate the issue and your position to your community. Legislators have many other avenues to get national or state analysis, reports and statistics. Local statistics and stories are important and you can be the only source for such rich information. Don't be afraid to humanize the issue by relating it to your local community or personal experience.

Make a clear, actionable request.

Many people are afraid that it's impolite to make a direct request. But, don't forget that the purpose of your meeting is to secure support for your issue. It is appropriate and expected that you will make a request at your meeting. The key is to make sure that your request is clearly articulated and actionable by the

legislator. Keep in mind that your request should be timely and consistent with the legislative process. It is usually not enough to ask for generic support for an issue or cause, rather make a direct and specific request that is tied to pending legislative activity (if possible). For example, ask that a legislator co-sponsor a bill. You should make reference to bill numbers and be knowledgeable about the status of the bill. Making a specific request gives you the opportunity to evaluate the legislator's response

Cultivate a relationship with staff.

Many grassroots advocates underestimate the important role of legislative staff. A supportive staff person can often make the difference between success and failure. Staff play an invaluable role in shaping a legislator's agenda and position on issues. It is important that you make every effort to cultivate a positive working relationship with staff. Over time, staff may even come to regard you as a helpful resource for information on your issue.

Follow-up.

What happens after a meeting is almost as important as the meeting itself. Send a 'thank you' letter after the meeting that not only expresses appreciation but reinforces your message and any verbal commitment of support made by the legislator or staff. If you promise during the meeting to get back in touch with additional information, be sure that you do so. Failure to follow up on your promise will call your credibility into question. Also, don't forget to report the results of your meeting back to NSTA/NCTM/Triangle Coalition/NASSMC/ITEA or local organization. This information is vital to coordinating overall legislative strategy and evaluating the impact of advocacy efforts. Follow-up is important even if the legislator does not agree to support your request because you are building a long-term relationship.

DON'T

Go "off-message" or discuss unrelated issues.

You must deliver a unified message during your meeting. Sending different messages or discussing unrelated subjects will only undermine your ability to secure support. Limit your advocacy to a single issue. Legislators meet with many groups and constituents so it is important that your message and request be clear and uniform.

Engage in partisan critiques.

It is best to keep the discussion based on the merits of the policy or issue. Avoid characterizing your position in strictly partisan terms. Worse, do not make snide or disparaging partisan comments. You are working on behalf of an issue, not a party. So, you want legislators of both parties to support your position. Be careful not to alienate legislators or staff based on partisanship.

Use threats.

While it may be tempting to tell a legislator who has rebuffed your request that "you'll never vote for him/her again" or that "you pay his/her salary," such discourtesy only ensures that your arguments will be discounted — now and in the future.

Be late.

Time is a valuable and scarce commodity for legislators. Punctuality conveys professionalism and demonstrates your commitment to your issue, which is after all the reason for the meeting. Arrive early and if you are meeting as a group allow time to calm nerves and make a final review of the talking points and message.

Get too comfortable.

Advocates are sometimes surprised by the courteous reception they receive, even from lawmakers who disagree with their position. As a constituent you will be accorded respect by the legislator and staff. Don't mistake this respect for agreement. Don't let the comfortable nature of the exchange deter you from making your request. And, don't mistake "concern" for your issue with support for your position.

Forget to follow-up.

Immediately send a thank you letter. Stay informed on your issue and track how your legislator responds. Did the legislator follow through on his/her promise? If not, request an explanation. If so, express your appreciation.

The Top Ten Things Congressional Staff Hate to Hear

(From Public Education Network website)

Number 10: But I thought my appointment was with the Senator!

Never, ever indicate that you are disappointed to be meeting with a staff person. On Capitol Hill, having a good relationship with a staff person can make or break your cause. One Congressional staff person said, "I remember one person who came to our office who threw his talking papers at me and stormed out when he realized he would be meeting with me, the person who handled his issues, and not the Congressman. He left such a bad impression that my boss told me I did not have to ever meet with him again!"

Number 9: Here's some reading material for you—our 300-page annual report.

"Our office once saved all of the unsolicited material we received over a one week period. This included reports, magazines, newsletter, information from meetings and the like. It did not include constituent letters, correspondence regarding legislation, or other materials regarding specific legislative issues. At the end of the week, we had a stack three feet high and no where to store it. Most of it was thrown away!" remembers a former Congressional staff person.

When meeting with a member of Congress or staff person, try to limit your leave behind materials to one or two pages, and include details on where this information can be located on the web, if appropriate. Offering the information in a file folder with your organization's name on the label will also help ensure that the materials are put in a file drawer, as opposed to the round file.

Number 8: How much of a campaign contribution did your boss get to vote against (or for) this bill?

Believe it or not, most staff have no idea who contributed to their boss' campaigns. Not only is this question insulting, but even if it were accurate, the staff person isn't likely to know.

Number 7: I assume you know all about HR 1234.

With thousands of bills being introduced during each Congress, no staff person will be able to keep them all straight. Always provide information on the bill title, number and general provisions when communicating with a Congressional office.

Number 6: No, I don't have an appointment, but I promise I'll only take half an hour of your time.

Unless it's an emergency, or you are good friends with the staff person, try not to engage in the dreaded "stop by." Most staff are happy to try to set up a meeting if you are relevant to the office (i.e., you are a constituent). And even if you have an appointment, never expect a half hour.

As Clair Seaver, the former health legislative assistant to Rep. Blumenauer (D-Ore) points out, "The Congressman's schedule is chaotic. It changes from minute to minute and meetings are sometimes postponed or canceled all together. When the meetings do occur as planned, the Congressman often has only a few minutes to focus on the discussion. Being able to make the point quickly and succinctly is very important. It's particularly important to start the meeting with a request. That way, if you're cut off you've at least put the most important point out there."

Number 5: No, I don't really need anything specific.

If you don't ask for something, a bill co-sponsorship, a congressional record statement, a meeting in the district, whatever, some staff will wonder why you came by. Updates on your issue are fine, so long as they are accompanied by a request. That will ensure that someone in the office thinks about you and your request for longer than five minutes. As one legislative director points out, "Constituents who contact me with great solutions to local problems always get my attention and frequently impact our decisions and policymaking efforts at the federal level."

Number 4: We have ten (or more) people in our group.

Congressional offices are tiny. If you have more than 5 people in your group, you'll be standing out in the hallway. Plus, having so many people talking at once can dilute the impact of your message. Try to limit your group to no more than 5.

Number 3: What you're telling me can't be right. I heard (fill in name of talk show host) say otherwise.

Most staff, or members for that matter, won't lie to you. They know that lying will get them in big trouble. Sometimes, they may see things differently than you do, but if they say a bill definitely is not going to be considered on the floor, or if there is no such legislation, I'd believe them.

A perfect example is a petition that was floating around the Internet about a House bill number 602P from a Congressman Schnell that would impose fees on use of e-mail. There is no such thing as either House bill 602P (that's not even a possible number), nor is there a Congressman Schnell.

Number 2: What do you mean we have to stand in the hall?

See number 4. A request to meet in the hallway is simply an indication of space limitations. Nothing else.

Number 1: No, I don't represent anyone from your district. I just thought you'd be interested in what I have to say.

"As someone who works for an appropriator, I get more than my fair share of meeting requests. Frankly, constituents always come first. That's who my boss is here to serve," says a legislative assistant to Congressman Norm Dicks (D-Wash). Members are elected to represent their constituents. Period. If you are not their constituent, you are not relevant to them. Some members do rise to higher positions, but that just means they represent the interest of other members, not the entire nation. Your time is always best spent working with your own elected official and turning them into an advocate for your cause.

The Legislative Process

How a Bill Becomes a Law

Hon. Robert H. Michel of Illinois in the House of Representatives

Thursday, February 8, 1979
Congressional Record

MR. MICHEL. Mr. Speaker, those of us in Congress are so close to the legislative process that we sometimes forget the way in which a bill becomes law is not clearly understood by many of our fellow Americans. I receive inquiries from time to time about this question. I have prepared a brief summary of the process in the hope it may be useful to anyone who is interested in the machinery of government.

How a Bill Becomes a Law

Ours is a government "of the people, by the people, for the people." It is not a pure democracy. It is a republic in a democracy. Our laws are the embodiment of the wishes and wants, the ideas and ideals of the American people expressed through their representatives in the Congress: 435 in the House of Representatives and 100 in the Senate. Any Member of the House or Senate may introduce a bill embodying a proposed law or revision of existing laws, at any time when his respective House is in session. When introduced, the bill will be entered in the *Journal of the House*, and the title and sponsor of it printed in the *Congressional Record* of that day.

Each Bill Numbered

Each bill introduced is assigned a number by the clerk of each House and referred to the committee having jurisdiction over the subject matter by the presiding officer; that is, the Speaker of the House or the President of the Senate. Copies of the bill are printed by the Government Printing Office and made publicly available from the congressional document rooms. Acting through its chairman, the committee decides whether a bill should be taken up by the full committee or referred to a subcommittee for its initial consideration.

The Deliberative Stage

The committee's deliberations are the most important stage of the legislative process. It is here that detailed study of the proposed legislation is made and where people are given the right to present their views in public hearings. When the chairman has set a date for public hearings it is generally announced by publication in the *Congressional Record*.

Copies of the bill under consideration by the committee are customarily sent to the executive departments or agencies concerned with the subject matter for their official views to be presented in writing or by oral testimony before the committee. The number of witnesses, pro and con, heard by the committee is largely dictated by the importance of the proposed legislation and degree of public interest.

Testimony Heard

The transcript of the testimony taken is available for inspection in the individual committee offices. Quite frequently, dependent on the importance of the subject matter, the committee hearings on a bill are printed and copies made available to the public.

After conclusion of the hearings, the committee proceeds to meet in executive sessions (sometimes referred to as "markup" sessions) to discuss the bill in detail and to consider such amendments as any Member of the committee may wish to offer. Each committee has its own rules of procedure but they generally conform to the rules of the House itself.

The Committee Vote

By a formal vote of the committee, it decides whether to report favorably to the House the bill with or without committee amendments. A committee report must accompany the bill, setting forth the nature of the bill and reasons for the committee's recommended approval. The report sets forth specifically the committee amendments and, in compliance with the rules of each House, indicates all changes the bill would make in existing law. Any committee Member, individually or jointly, may file additional supplemental or minority views to accompany the majority committee report. The committee report, accompanying the bill, is viewed by the courts and the administrative agencies as the most important document as to the intent of the Congress in the proposed legislation.

After Reporting

When a bill is reported by the committee it is placed on the appropriate calendar. The majority leadership decides how and when the bill will be considered on the floor. In general the bill is allowed to remain on the calendar for several days to enable Members to become acquainted with its provisions.

In both the House and Senate innumerable measures of relatively minor importance are disposed of by unanimous consent. In the Senate, where debate is unlimited, major bills are brought up on motion of the majority leader and in the House are called up under a privileged resolution reported from the Rules Committee which fixes the limits of debate and whether amendments may be offered from the floor. The Rules Committee resolution is called a "rule" for

consideration of a bill; a “closed rule” if no amendments are allowed as is generally the case in tax bills; and an “open rule” if amendments can be offered.

Reaching Consensus

While there are distant differences between the House and Senate procedures, in general a bill is debated at length with the proponents and opponents presenting their views to acquaint the Membership, as well as the general public, with the issues involved, and all with a view to arriving at the consensus. Amendments are frequently offered to make the measure more in conformity with the judgment of the majority. In the course of consideration of the bill there are various parliamentary motions, in both the House and the Senate, which may be offered to determine the sentiment of the Members with respect to the pending legislation. The measure may be postponed to some future date or referred back to the committee, which reported it. With the conclusion of general debate and the reading of the bill for amendments, the question becomes whether the House or Senate, as the case may be, will pass the bill in its final form. The *Congressional Record* of the day the bill was under consideration will set forth the verbatim debate on the bill and the disposition made of such amendments as were offered.

After Passage

With the passage of a bill by either body, it is messaged to the other with the request that they concur. If no action has been taken on the like measure by the body receiving the message, the bill is usually referred to the appropriate committee of that body for consideration. Hearings are again held and the bill reported for floor action. On relatively minor or noncontroversial matters, the Senate or the House accepts the measure as messaged to it by the other body. If there are substantial differences between the House and Senate versions of a given bill, the measure is sent to a conference committee, which is appointed by the speaker and the president of the Senate from the ranking committee Members of each body having original jurisdiction over the bill. The object of the conference committee is to adjust the differences between the two bodies, and to report back to each its agreement. The report of the conference committee must be in writing and signed by those agreeing thereto and must have the signature of the majority of the conferees of each house.

Conference Report

The report of the conference committee cannot be amended and must be accepted or rejected by each House as it stands. If either House finds itself unable to accept the conference committee report, a further conference is usually requested. When the bill has been agreed to in identical form by both bodies, a copy of the bill is enrolled, signed by the speaker and by the president of the Senate, for presentation to the president. The bill becomes law with the president’s signature of approval, or it may become law without his signature if

he does not return it, with his objections, to the Congress within ten days of its presentation to him. If the President should return the bill, with his objections, to the originating body of the Congress, his veto may be overridden by two-thirds of both the House and Senate, respectively, voting to have the measure become law, the president's objections to the contrary notwithstanding. Both the President's veto message and a record of the vote of the individual Members in the motion to override are required by the Constitution and set forth in the *Congressional Record*.

Frequently Used Terms

Members of Congress and Congressional staffers use jargon that is not always clear to those new to the legislative process. Here are a few terms that you may encounter as you venture toward Capitol Hill.

ACT

A bill that has already been approved by either the House or the Senate

APPROPRIATION

A formal Congressional approval in specific "dollar" figures to fund a program

AUTHORIZATION

Legislation that creates or extends a program, generally including an outline for funding (although no funding is assured until after the formal appropriations process)

BILL

A piece of legislation, especially in its early stages. When identical measures are introduced in the House and Senate Chambers they are referred to as "companion" bills

BUDGET AUTHORITY

Appropriations, contract authority, and borrowing authority are set forth to insure that Federal Agencies may incur financial liability

CALENDAR

The official line-up of business awaiting action on the House or Senate floor

CLOTURE

Only relevant in the Senate, a rule imposing a 100-hour limit for debate on the Senate floor, when agreed to by three-fifths of the Members

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Selected Members of the House and Senate meeting to produce one document by resolving differences in similar House-passed and Senate-passed legislation in preparation for final passage

CONTINUING RESOLUTION

Joint appropriations measure that provides funding for an authorized program for which a regular appropriations bill has not been passed in time to ensure an uninterrupted flow of services

FISCAL YEAR

The duration for which funds are appropriated for the Federal government, October 1 - September 30

GERMANENESS

A standing rule in the House that all amendments to a piece of legislation must relate to the subject matter under consideration

MARKUP

The amendment and passage of a piece of legislation by a committee or subcommittee to prepare it for consideration on the floor of the House or Senate

POINT OF ORDER

An objection raised by a member of Congress that a specific matter currently under consideration is somehow in violation of the chamber's standing rules of debate

QUORUM

The number of Members required to be present to conduct official business (218 in the House, 51 in the Senate)

RANKING MEMBER

The majority member holding the most seniority of a given Committee, following the chairperson

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

The most senior minority member on a Committee

RIDER

An unrelated amendment to a piece of legislation to ensure its passage (more common in the Senate than the House, due to a germaneness rule)

SUSPENSION OF THE RULES

A mechanism only utilized in the House that significantly restricts time for floor debate, disallows amendments, and requires passage by two-thirds majority—generally used for non-controversial measures at the close of a legislative session

WHIP

Appointed member of each party in each chamber to assist leadership in developing the legislative agenda, and to monitor likelihood of passage on controversial measures (count votes) among other duties

Resources

Key Internet Sites

THOMAS: Legislative Information on the Internet

(<http://thomas.loc.gov>)

THOMAS provides updates on any bill pending in Congress that may be of interest. You can check the status, read the bill, retrieve a summary of the bill, and read any amendments offered to the measure during floor debate. In addition, THOMAS offers the ability to read the goings-on in Congress every day by putting the *Congressional Record* on-line.

THOMAS also provides users with numerous crosslinks that will connect you with other federal government resources.

FirstGov.gov -- the official U.S. Government portal to 30 million pages of government information, services, and online transactions

The Biographical directory of the United States Congress

Roll Call -- Covering Capitol Hill since 1955

Department of Education (<http://www.ed.gov>)

National Science Foundation (<http://www.nsf.gov>)

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (<http://www.nasa.gov>)

Department of Commerce (<http://www.doc.gov>)

Environmental Protection Agency (<http://www.epa.gov>)

Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Mathematics and Science Education (<http://www.enc.org>)

Department of Energy (<http://www.doe.gov>)

National Institutes of Health (<http://www.nih.gov>)

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (<http://www.noaa.gov>)

Office of Science and Technology Policy (<http://www.ostp.gov>)

General Information:

Senate -- (202) 224-3121

<http://www.senate.gov>

House -- (202) 225-3121

<http://www.house.gov>

Senators:

(202) 224-extension

Representatives:

(202) 225-extension

Mailing Addresses:

The Honorable (Senator's name)
Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable (Representative's name)
House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Senate Office Buildings:

SR -- Russell Senate Office Building
(Room numbers have three digits, first digit is the floor number)
SD -- Dirksen Senate Office Building
(Room numbers have four digits, first digit is the floor number)
SH—Hart Senate Office Building
Annex -- 119 D Street, NE

House Office Buildings

CHOB – Cannon House Office Building
(Room numbers have three digits, first digit is floor number)
LHOB – Longworth House Office Building
(Room numbers have four digits starting with 1, second digit is floor number)
RHOB – Rayburn House Office Building
(Room numbers have four digits starting with 2, second digit is floor number)
Annex 1 – 300 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Annex 2 – Second and D Street, NE

How to Order House and Senate Bills:

Bills may be obtained most quickly through the Library of Congress's *THOMAS* web page: <http://thomas.loc.gov/>.

Hardcopies of all "H.R." bills may be obtained by writing the House Documents Room,
Ford House Office Building, Room B-18, Washington, DC 20515.

Copies of all "S." bills may be obtained by writing the Senate Documents Room,
Hart Senate Office Building, Room B04, Washington, DC 20510.

Please include a self-addressed mailing label with your request.

Useful Numbers

Cloakroom:

Provides information on scheduling and floor action.

Senate: (202) 224-4691 (Dem.)
(202) 224-6191 (Rep.)
House: (202) 225-7400 (Dem.)
(202) 225-7430 (Rep.)

Document Rooms:

Information on availability of and copies of bills, reports and public laws.

Senate: (202) 224-7860
House: (202) 225-3456

White House General Information:

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500
(202) 456-1414
<http://www.whitehouse.gov>

Education-Related Committees of 112th Congress

House Committee on Education and Labor

<http://edlabor.house.gov>

Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee

<http://help.senate.gov>

Science-Related Committees of 112th Congress

House Committee on Science and Technology

<http://science.house.gov>

Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation

<http://commerce.senate.gov>

Appropriations Committees of 112th Congress

House Appropriations Committee

<http://www.house.gov/appropriations>

Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Subcommittee

<http://appropriations.house.gov/Subcommittees/Subcommittee/?IssueID=34777>

Science, State, Justice, and Commerce, and Related Agencies
Subcommittee

<http://appropriations.house.gov/Subcommittees/Subcommittee/?IssueID=34794>

Senate Appropriations Committee

<http://appropriations.senate.gov>

Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Subcommittee

<http://appropriations.senate.gov/sc-labor.cfm>

Commerce, Justice and Science

<http://appropriations.senate.gov/sc-commerce.cfm>

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