Build a Relationship with Your Member of Congress
Agenda in Brief

1. Who does Congress listen to?
2. How does Congress operate?
   A. Congress listens, now what?
   B. What is Congressional Oversight?
3. What can you do to be heard by Congress?
Who Does Congress Listen To?
(in general)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Key Information</th>
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</table>
| Academia     | - Scientific Studies
- Research Papers
- Expert opinions
- Demonstrations
- Long-term discussion of effects
- Focused on science
- High level of detail
- Research agenda |
| NGO/Industry | - Internal research
- Coalition views
- Expert opinions
- Media comments
- Real world examples
- Low to high levels of detail
- Focus on membership / funders
- Advocacy agenda |
| Federal Agencies | - Scientific Studies
- Research Papers
- Expert opinions
- Demonstration projects
- Agency views
- Focus on federal needs
- Leadership / Administration Agenda |
| Constituents | - On-the-ground impacts of policies
- More questions than answers (in general)
- “Hey, guess what I just heard?” |
How Does Congress Operate?

Hearings

Legislation

Oversight
Congressional Oversight (generally)

• What is it?
  • Committee Jurisdiction over Federal Agencies
  • Responsible for overseeing activities and monitoring for waste, fraud, or abuse
Congressional Oversight (generally)

• When is Oversight conducted?
  • Always. Oversight is (or should be) politically agnostic.

• How does Congress Conduct Oversight?
  • Internal process
  • Often conducted outside the public view
Tools of Congressional Oversight

- GAO Reports
- Letters to Agencies
- Congressional Hearings
- Subpoenas
- Depositions / Transcribed Interviews
- Staff report (usually concluding oversight work)
Communicating to Congress
(and where do I fit in?)

Direct
- Congressional Testimony
- Congressional Briefings
- Meetings with Staff
- Maintaining Hill Relationships
- Writing Letters to Member and Committee Staff

Indirect
- Media Reporting on Research
- Writing Science Op-Eds focused on findings, studies, perceived threats
- Publish Research
- Public Discussions

Congressional Action
- Committee Hearings
- Legislation to Direct Agency Activities
- Oversight of Ongoing Agency Activities

Union of Concerned Scientists
Briefing Congressional Staff
(or anyone, really)
Briefing Congressional Staff

- Know Your Audience
  - Who are you meeting with?
  - Do they have specific knowledge or interest?
- Ask questions of staff
- Staff are eyes and ears of the Member
- Relate Specific Findings
  - The reason you are in the room
  - Connect dots efficiently (less is more, unless more is required)
  - Tell a story
Briefing Congressional Staff

• If X, Then Y, But also Z
  • Drive the conversation, don’t just participate
• If you have a specific request, make it
  • Always better to be direct than vague
• Maximize opportunity for follow-up
  • Time is valuable, no one wastes time
Briefing Congressional Staff

• Don’t get discouraged
  • 7 Congress Rule (that’s a LONG time!)

• Meeting with Staff is just as, and sometimes more, valuable than meeting with your Member directly
  • Continue to educated new staff, develop relationship with office.
  • Establishing individual credibility
  • Help develop institutional knowledge on issue
Q & A
Are you a scientist, engineer, or technical expert?

@SciNetUCS

ScienceNetwork@ucsusa.org
Not a scientist? We need your voice too!

www.ScienceChampions.org

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Thank You!