

# FPC Webinar Agenda



**NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION OF  
REALTORS®**

- Welcome – Victoria Givens, NAR
- Legislative Update – Ryan Rusbuldt, NAR
- Training Session – Jordan Davis, CMF
- Q&A

# What to do Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

*Jordan N. Davis*

*VP Communications & Programming*



CONGRESSIONAL  
MANAGEMENT  
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# Today's Training

- Understanding the Hill Meeting Landscape
- Before the Meeting
- During the Meeting
- After the Meeting



# Understanding the Hill Meeting Landscape



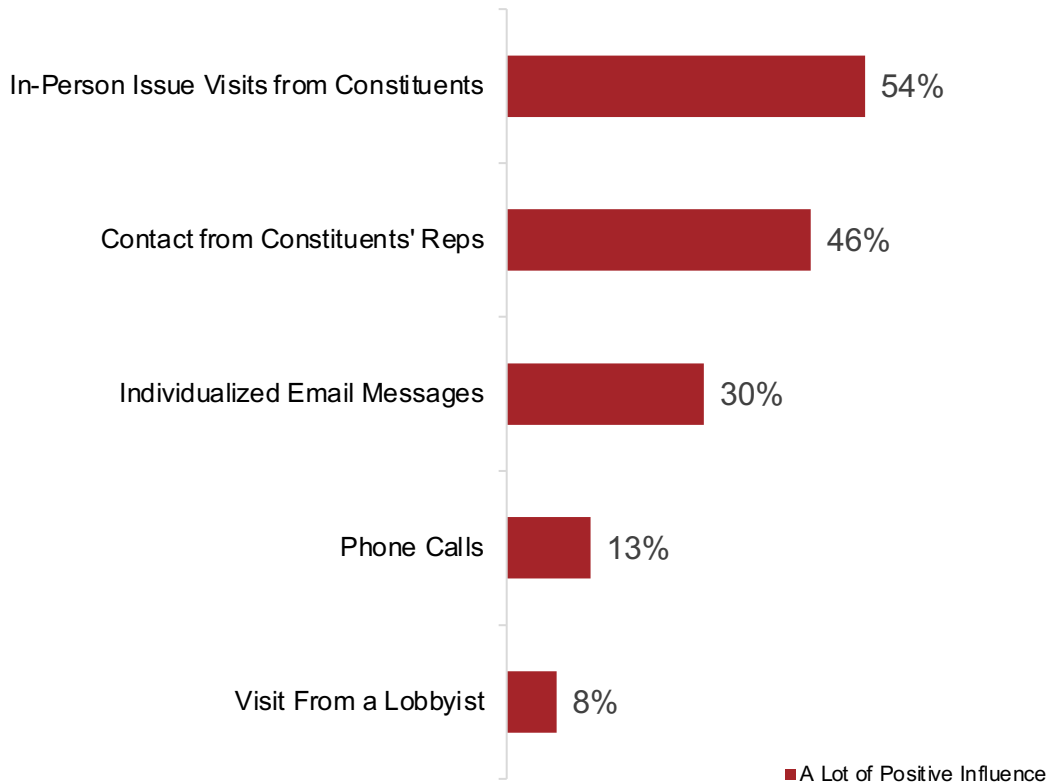
# Congressional Insight



*“If your Member/Senator has not already arrived at a firm decision on an issue, how much influence might the following advocacy strategies directed to your office have on their decision?”*



Before, During, and After Hill Meetings



# Meetings Still Matter...but Time is Tight

## Member Time Commitments by the Numbers

**70** avg hours worked per week (in session; 59 hours out of session)

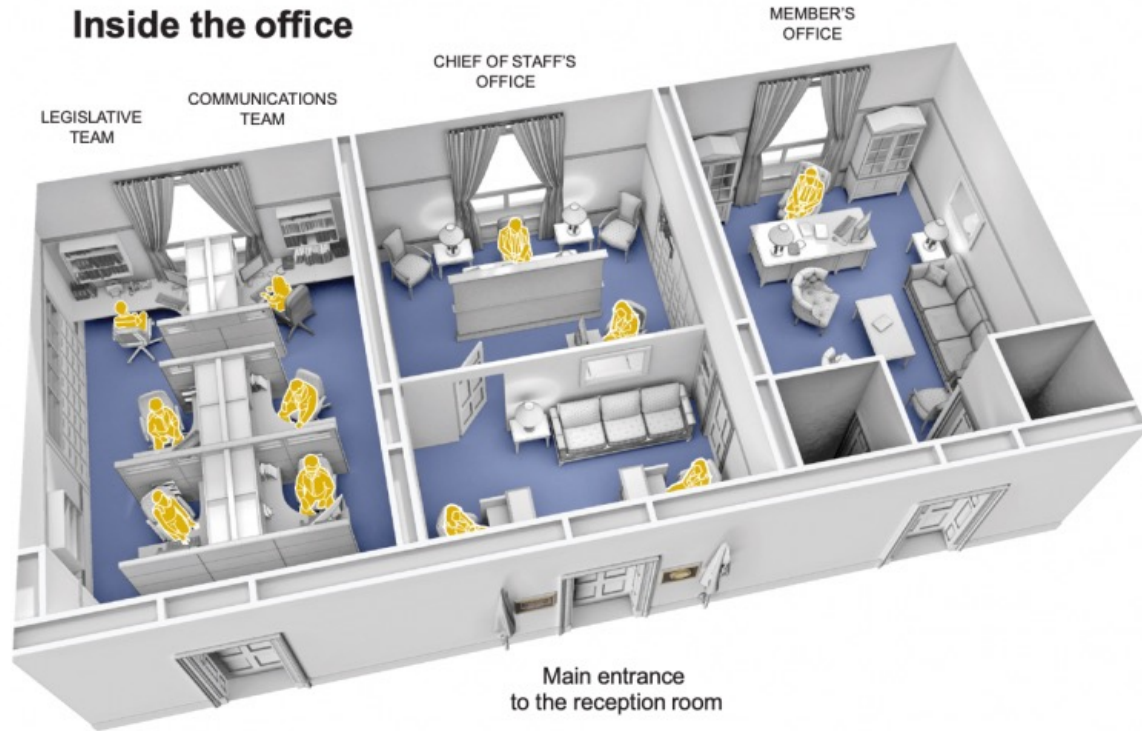
**10-20** recorded votes per week

**2-6** committee hearings per week

**13** average number of meetings per day (~15-20+ meetings per day for legislative/senior staff)



...and so is  
space.



# Politics and Pandemics Have Created an Experience Gap

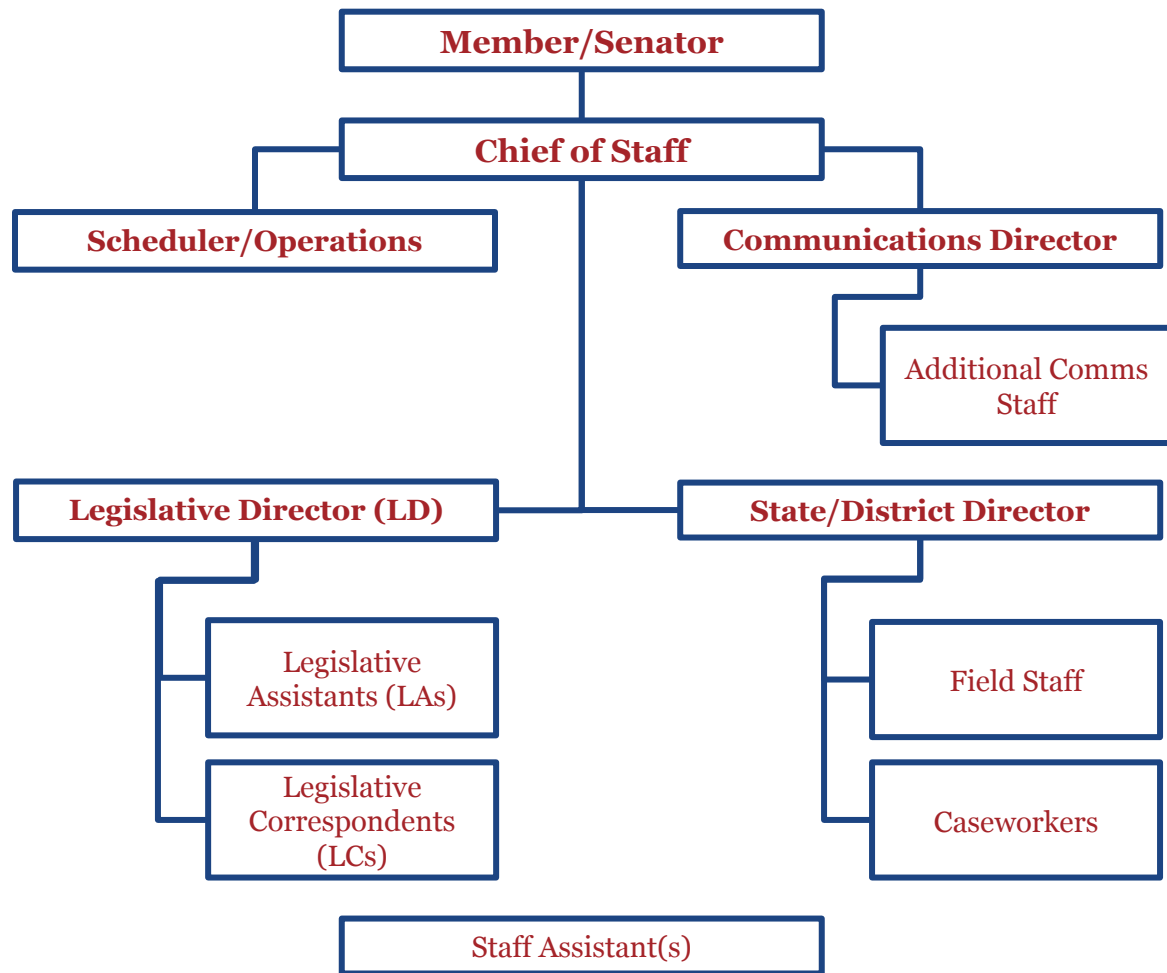
- More than half of Members have been in Congress less than 3 terms
- 72% of congressional staff are under age 40
- Most Legislative Assistants did not experience in-person meetings as junior staffers due to virtual and hybrid work during and following the pandemic
- Generally, congressional staff of all levels have less meeting experience – or have lost some meeting “muscle memory” – due to the disruption of the pandemic years





# Get to know the Staff

**Keep in Mind:**  
Congressional offices are really 535 unique small businesses, so each office's approach may be different



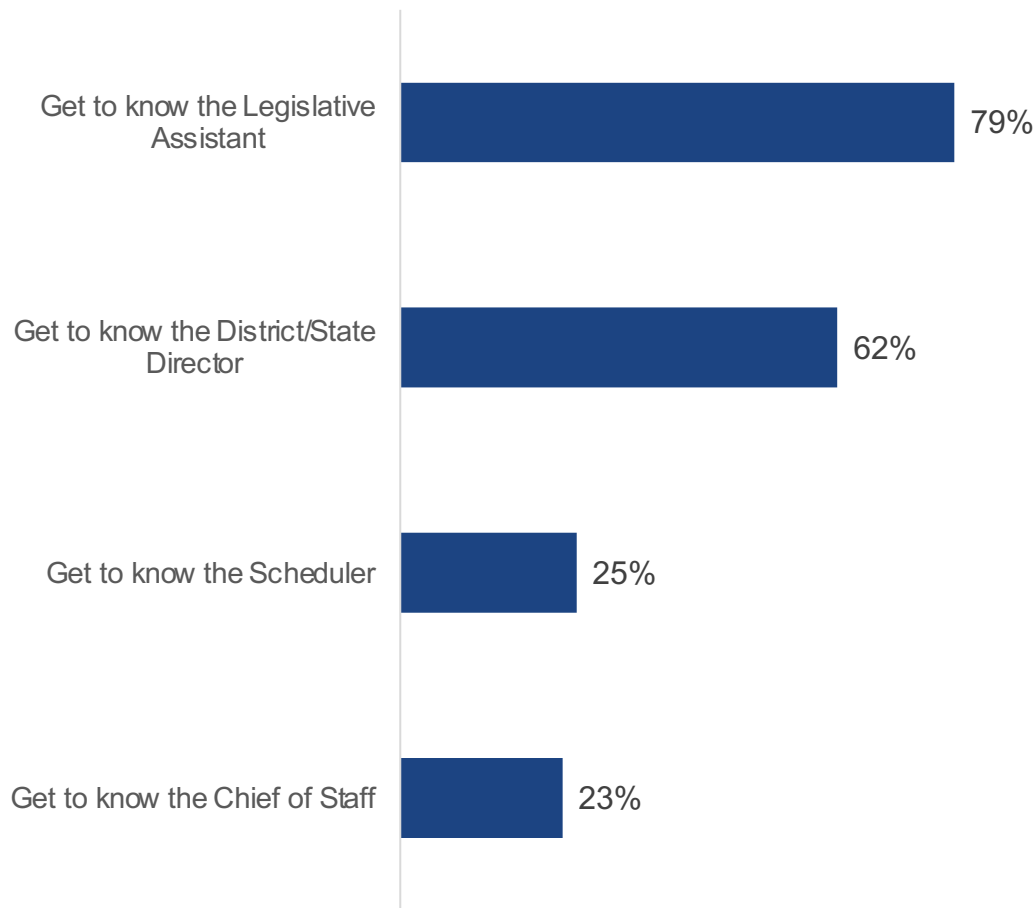
# Congressional Insight



*“In thinking about constituents and the groups that represent them (e.g., associations, nonprofits, companies), what should they do...to build better relationships with your office and your Member/Senator?”*



Before, During, and After Hill Meetings



# Stay Clear-Eyed About Meetings

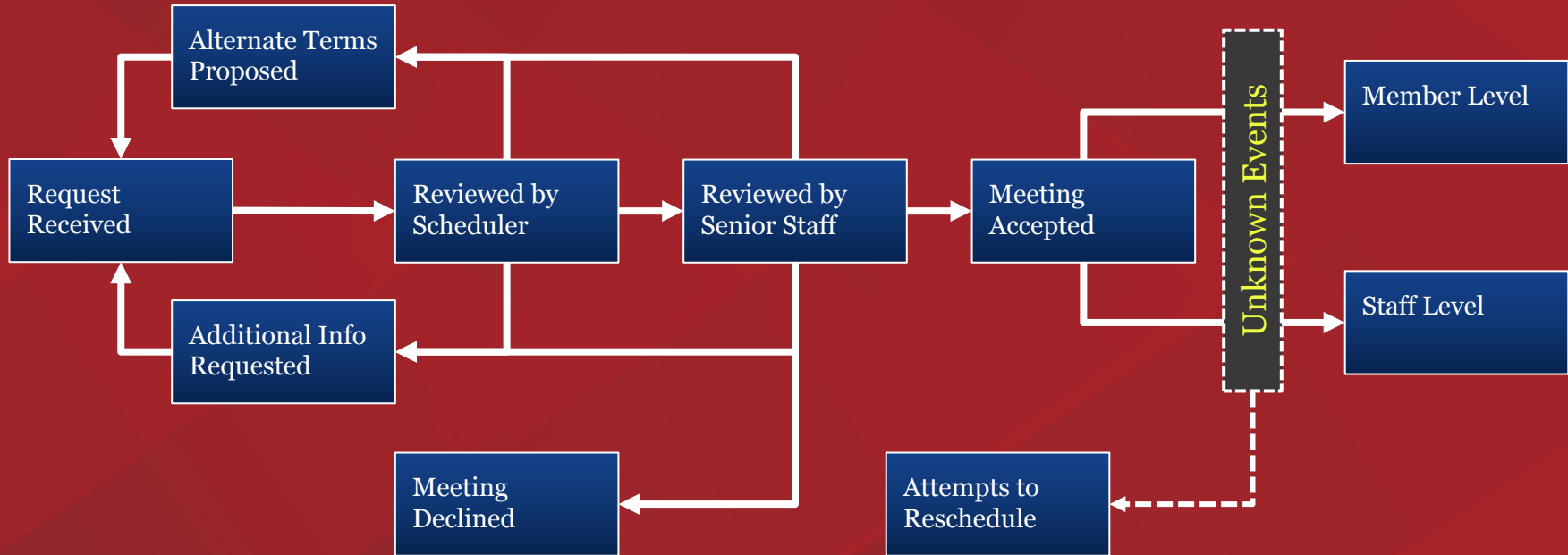
- More likely to meet with staff than the Member
- Staff are likely to be overscheduled and underprepared – treat it as an opportunity to meet them where they are and educate
- Just like time, space is limited for in-person meetings, especially in the House
- Virtual meetings are an option, but nothing beats in-person meetings in D.C. or in the State/District
- Be prepared for last minute changes! It may not start on time, it may change locations (e.g., office, hallway, committee room, cafeteria) and it may be brief!



# Before the Meeting



# Overview of Typical Scheduling Review Process



# Top-10 Congressional Scheduling Pet Peeves

1. Vague or incomplete information
2. Making multiple changes to the original request
3. Misrepresenting the request by providing false information about the meeting or attendees' background



# What we've heard



*“...have as much information in your initial meeting request as possible.”*



Former Scheduler



Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

# Top-10 Congressional Scheduling Pet Peeves

4. Requesting a meeting MONTHS in advance
5. Requesting a meeting DAYS in advance
6. Sending repeat emails “demanding” a commitment





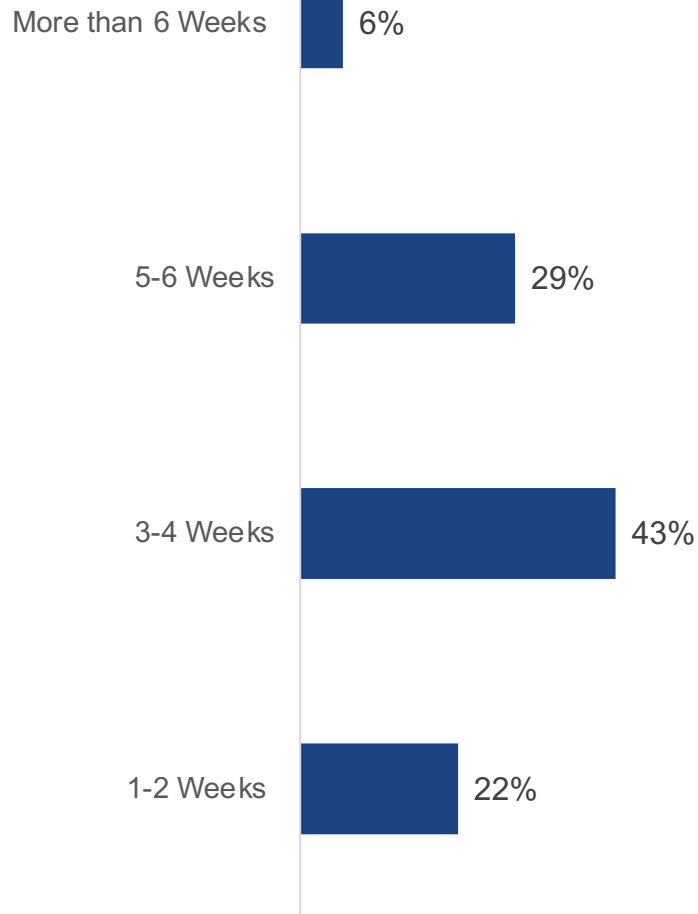
# Congressional Insight



*“How many weeks in advance should [a meeting] request be made for the Member to personally participate?”*



Before, During, and After Hill Meetings



# Top-10 Congressional Scheduling Pet Peeves

7. Refusing to meet with staff
8. Doing an end run around the scheduler by emailing the Member, Chief of Staff
9. Sending only a DC-based person or lobbyist with no ties to the home district/state
10. Not showing up with constituent



# Congressional Insight



“Our **number one factor** in scheduling a meeting is if a **constituent is in the group.**”

-House Scheduler



# Planning Ahead for Your Meeting

**Check Your Number of Attendees:** Too many people, and you'll end up meeting in the hallway. Keep the group small and strategic. And make sure you have a constituent.

**Map Your Journey:** Congressional office buildings can be a maze. Double-check the location, building entrances, and room numbers to avoid unnecessary stress.

**Prepare for Security:** Congressional buildings require you to go through security screenings, so plan to bring only necessary items and avoid large items to streamline the process.



# Planning Ahead for Your Meeting

**Plan to Arrive Early, But Not Too Early:** Arrive with enough time to account for security checks and unexpected delays, but don't show up so early that you're left waiting around. Arriving at an office 5 minutes before your meeting is MORE than enough time.

**Be Ready for Delays:** Congress runs on its own schedule. Prepare for the possibility of your meeting running late or being rescheduled and be prepared to be flexible with your time.



# Planning Ahead for Your Meeting

**If possible, send pre-read materials to staff:** This enables a more productive and focused discussion and helps ensure that key points are communicated clearly. It also demonstrates professionalism and respect for their time and opens lines of communications, which can help build rapport and strengthen the relationship for future advocacy efforts.

**Prepare Ahead of Time for Follow-Ups:** Block out time on your calendar to send thank-you emails, share additional materials, etc. Quick action on follow-ups helps keep the momentum going. Sustained action helps you stay relevant.



# Congressional Insight



“Send materials ahead of time by email - this **starts the communication before the meeting**, good staff will read ahead.”

-Senior Legislative Assistant



# During the Meeting





# Tips for Productive Meetings

**Be Clear on Your Goal:** Know exactly what you want to achieve. Are you seeking support for a bill? Providing information? Building a relationship? A clear goal helps you stay focused and make the best use of the time.

**Know Your Issue:** Be well-versed in the facts, stats, and relevant background information related to your issue. Be ready to answer questions or provide clarification on any points.

**Connect Your Issue to the State/District and Member's Priorities:** Demonstrate how your issue aligns with the Member's interests or or affects their constituents can make a compelling case for support.



# Congressional Insight



*“How frequently do you experience the following in constituent meetings?”*

# 90%

of Legislative Staff say constituents frequently do not have data on the impact of a policy/issue on the district/State.

# 87%

of Legislative Staff say constituents frequently did not know the policymaker’s history on a policy/issue.



Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

# Tips for Productive Meetings

**Tell a Story:** Facts are important, but connecting your issue to real people or specific situations can make it more relatable and compelling. Personal stories or case studies can leave a lasting impact.

**Keep It Concise:** Congressional meetings are typically short. Be succinct and prioritize the most important points. Respect the limited time to ensure the meeting stays focused and productive.



# Tips for Productive Meetings

**Don't Forget to Make Your Ask:** Don't assume the Member or staffer will know exactly what you're asking for. Be clear and specific about the action you hope they will take.

**Be Professional and Respectful:** Whether you agree or disagree with the Member's stance, maintain professionalism and a respectful tone. Building a relationship is often as important as achieving your immediate goal.

**Express Gratitude:** Always thank the Member or staff for their time and consideration. Building goodwill can help with future interactions.



# What Policymakers Want to Know

## **Be Prepared to Have Answers to These Baseline Questions:**

- What specific action do you want me to take?
- Why would my constituents want me to do that?
- What are the impacts on my state or district?
- What are my constituents' personal stories or connections to the policy?
- Who else is supporting/opposing this policy or action?



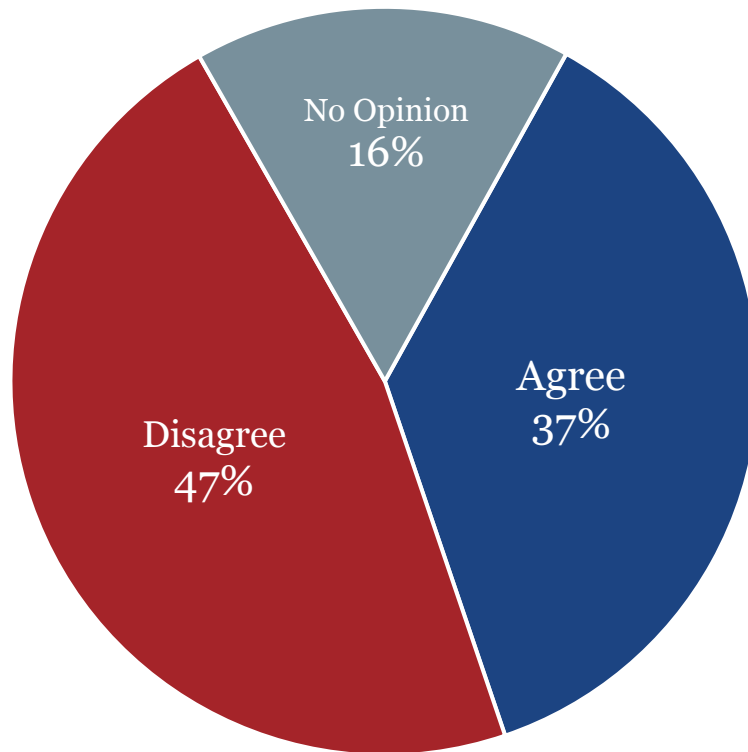
# Congressional Insight



*“Most of the written materials left behind by constituent groups as part of an organized fly-in or lobby day are helpful to our policy decision-making process.”*



Before, During, and After Hill Meetings



# Tips on Leave Behinds

**Be Concise:** Your materials should be short, focused, and to the point. Highlight the key facts, your main ask, and relevant information without overwhelming them with too much detail.

**Make it Relevant:** If possible, customize the materials to reflect the priorities and interests of the Member or staffer you're meeting with. Relate your issue directly to their priorities, or their district and constituents.

**Use Clear, Visual Design:** A well-designed handout with clear headings, bullet points, and any necessary charts or visuals can make your materials more digestible. Avoid long paragraphs or dense text that might be skipped over.



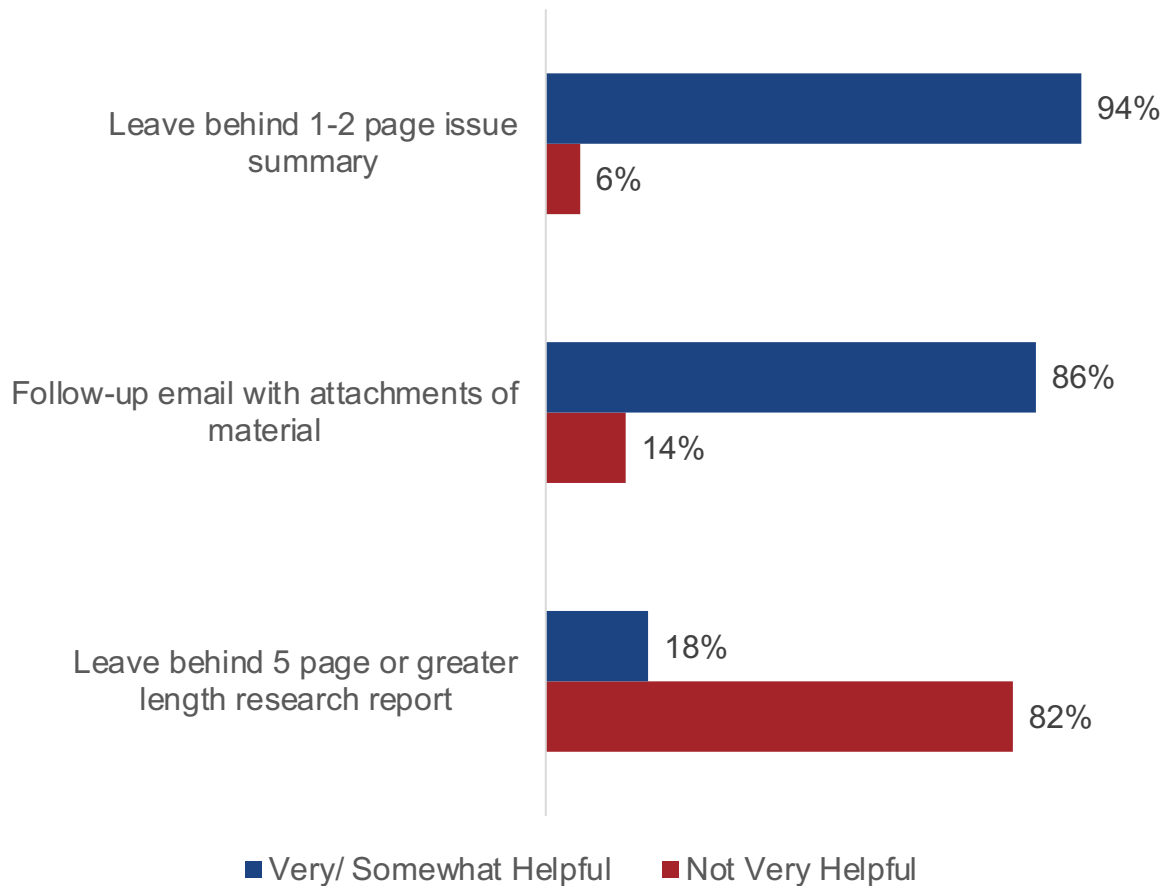
# Congressional Insight



*“When meeting with a group of constituents as part of an organized fly-in or lobby day, please indicate the helpfulness of the following written material.”*



Before, During, and After Hill Meetings





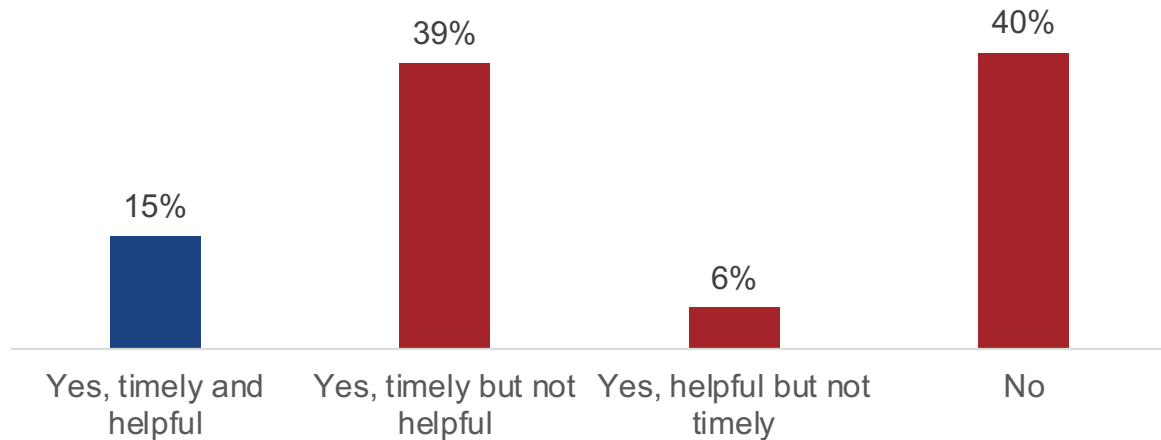
# After the Meeting



# Congressional Insight



*Do constituents (or their organization) generally follow up with you in a helpful and timely manner?*



# Timely Follow Up is Critically Important

**Reinforces Your Message:** Follow-up helps ensure that your concerns or requests are remembered and reinforces the importance of the issue.

**Builds Relationships:** Timely follow-up helps establish a relationship with congressional offices, making it easier to communicate and influence future decisions.

**Shows Commitment:** Following up demonstrates that you are engaged, persistent, and invested in the issue, making your advocacy more impactful.



# Tips for Email Follow Up

## First, remember your audience...

- **Overwhelming Volume:** Staff face an overwhelming number of emails daily
- **Prioritization:** Staff must balance many competing priorities, often limiting their ability to quickly digest materials and making quick or individualized responses challenging.
- **Overcoming Noise:** Advocates should craft clear, concise, and targeted messages to increase the chances of being heard amidst the high volume.

# Tips for Email Follow Up

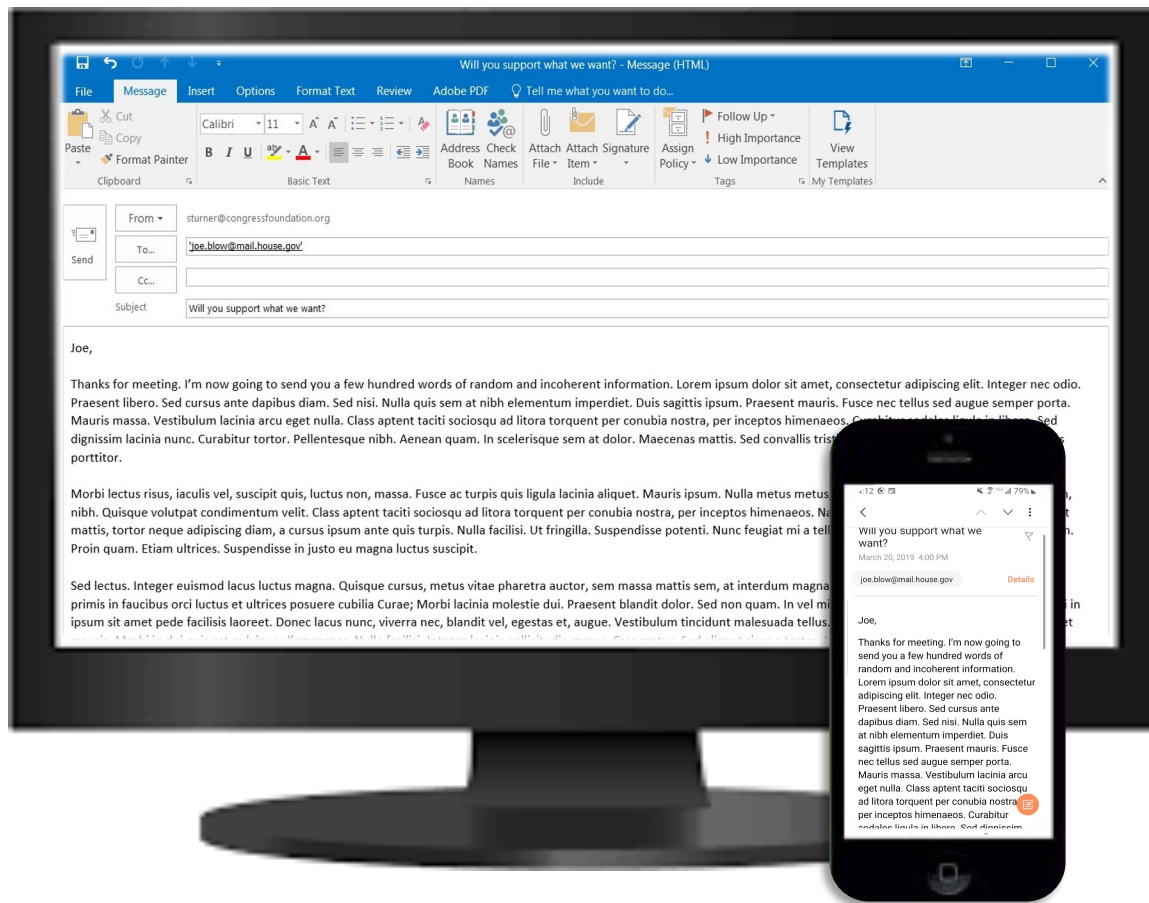
- Keep the subject line relevant and concise, shoot for less than 9 words
- Reference your meeting but keep the body short, use bullet points
- Send only the most relevant information and remember attachments
- Most messages will be first read on a phone, so be sure to format accordingly
- Remember: quick follow-ups are most relevant and impactful; and a cheerful and thankful tone will go a long way.



# Email:



## Not like this.

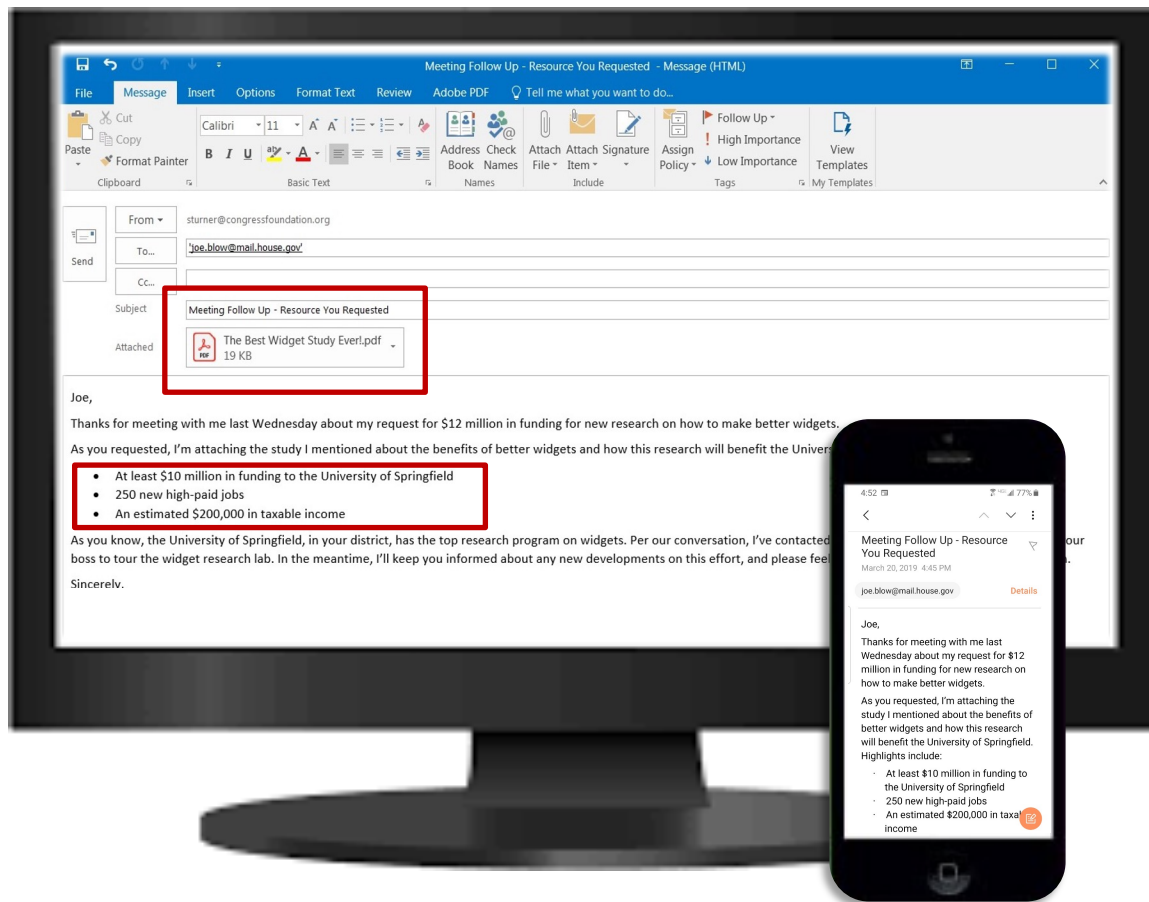


Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

# Email:



Like this!



Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

# Congressional Insight



“If there’s an ask to sign on to a bill or to sign onto a letter, especially something with a deadline, **and I never hear about it again...** I’m wondering how much of a priority it is to the group.”

-Legislative Director





# Q & A



Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

# Thank You



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