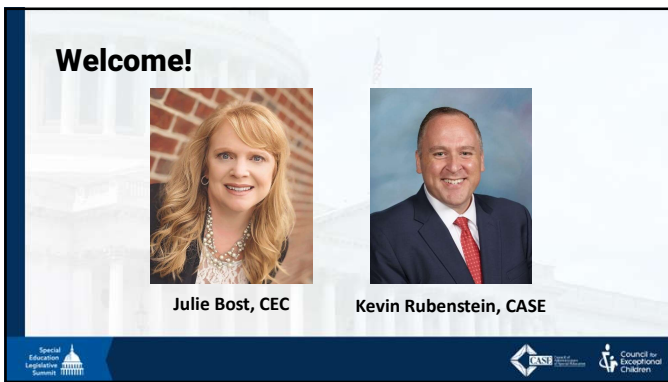




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Council for
Exceptional
Children



Julie Bost, CEC

Special
Education
Legislative
Summit



4

SELS Planning Committee

- Dr. Brigid Bright
- Cherie Johnson
- Myrna Mandlawitz
- Angelica Ramirez
- Chad Rummel
- Kuna Tavalin
- Melissa Trout
- Laurie VanderPloeg
- Phyllis Wolfram

Special
Education
Legislative
Summit



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Children

Special
Education
Legislative
Summit



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CEC Board of Directors

• Anna Adl	• Adam Moore
• Radha Bala	• Wendy Otheim
• Amy Braddock	• Ruby Owiny
• Jennifer Diliberto	• Mabel Rivera
• Jennifer Lesh	• Zephine Smith-Dixon
• Concetta Lewis	• Kareem Thompson
• Toni Mixon	• Ben Tillotson

Special Education Legislative Summit 2025

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Special Education Legislative Summit



July 13-16, 2025

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CASE Executive Committee

• Nora Boettcher	• Cherie Johnson
• Mary Lynn Boscardin	• Joe Kwisz
• Tricia Cox	• Ramona Lee
• Eric Hoppstock	• Kindel Mason
• Lisa Hughes	• Chrissy Peterson
• Will Hunter	• Missy Taylor
• Damita James	• Richard Templeton
• William Jeffreys	

Special Education Legislative Summit 2025

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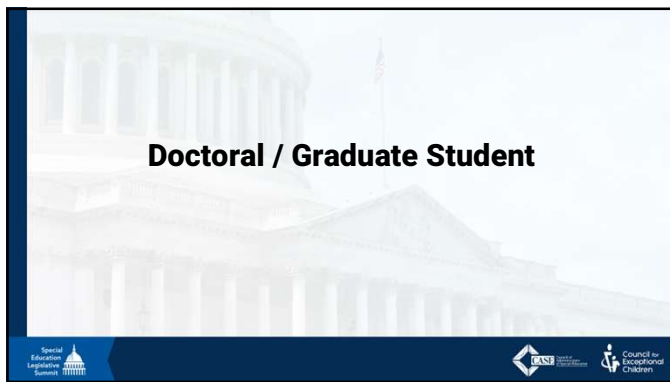
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19






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21





By summer, when given a beverage of their choice, the educator will drink it independently and without interruption, increasing from 0% to 100% of the time.



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WIFI

Network: Westin_Conference
Password: CECSEL



23

App - Swapcard



24

Connect & Share with CEC and CASE

 @cecmembership.bsky.social
  @casecec

 @cec_headquarters
  @case.cec

 /CECHQ
  /CASECEC





25







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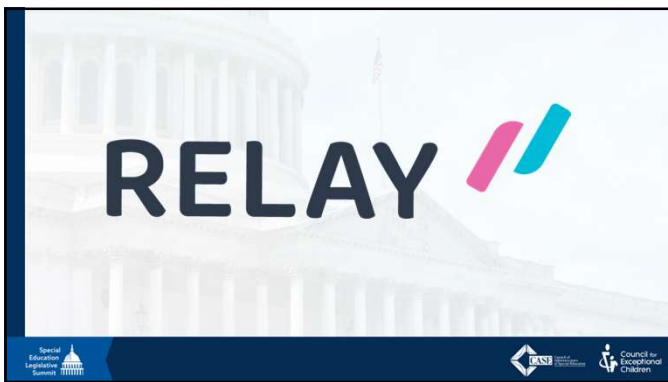




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Washington Update

Myrna Mandlawitz, CASE Policy/Legislative Consultant
Kuna Tavalin, CEC Senior Policy & Advocacy Advisor

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Agenda

- Useful terminology (AKA "Washington Speak!")
- Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Appropriations
 - Status/Timing
 - Distribution
- FY 2026 Appropriations
 - President's Budget
 - Timing
- Latest Action: One Big Beautiful Bill Act
- "Politics"

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Before We Get Started, Some Helpful Terminology

Authorization: Enacting a program into existence (IDEA).
Appropriation: Funding for authorized programs (IDEA funding!).
Discretionary Spending: Government functions funded through annual appropriations (approx 30% of fed spending).
Mandatory Spending: "Entitlement" or nondiscretionary spending (i.e. Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid).
Federal Fiscal Year: Oct. 1 – Sept. 30.

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....and More Terminology!

Mark-up: Subcommittee/committee meets to debate, amend, vote on a bill before it moves to the floor.

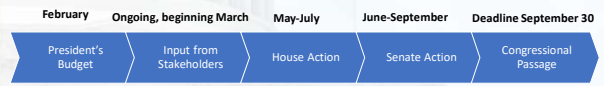
Continuing Resolution. Stop-gap funding bill to keep government operating....while Congress figures out appropriations!

Recess: Work period when Members are in their home states/districts.




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"NORMAL" Appropriations Cycle



The flowchart illustrates the 'NORMAL' Appropriations Cycle with the following steps and timeline:




- February:** President's Budget
- Ongoing, beginning March:** Input from Stakeholders
- May-July:** House Action
- June-September:** Senate Action
- Deadline September 30:** Congressional Passage

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Status of FY 2025 Appropriations


- Full-Year Continuing Resolution!
 - Ostensibly at FY 2024 levels.
 - No actual amounts for # of programs in legislative language.
- Latest action: Delayed distribution of \$7 billion enacted \$\$
 - \$376 M. – Title I-C Migrant Education State Grants.
 - \$890 M. – Title III-A English Language Acquisition Grants.
 - \$1.33 B. – Title IV-B 21st Century Community Learning Centers.
 - \$1.38 B. – Title IV-A Student Support & Academic Achievement Grants.
 - \$2.190 B. – Title II-A Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants.
 - \$715 M. – Adult Education State Grants.

39

Status of FY 2026 Appropriations




- FY 2026: Begins Oct. 1, 2025.
- President's budget released in May – Just a proposal!
 - Cuts education funding by 15.6% (\$12.4 billion).
 - Eliminates 30 education programs overall:
 - Javits Gifted and Talented, Special Education Research
 - Block grants IDEA, rolling current \$\$ for Preschool and Part D National Activities into Part B (K-12 state grants).
 - Creates K-12 block grant, eliminating 18 programs and cutting current aggregate funding in half.
 - Eliminates all teacher/administrator prep grants.
- WE NEED YOUR ADVOCACY TO STOP THIS PROPOSAL!!!


40

Next Steps for FY 2026 Appropriations

- House and Senate Approps Subcommittees...
 - Got input from Members of Congress, outside organizations.
 - Held oversight hearings on the FY 2026 budget.
- Now they must:
 - Draft bills that reflect their priorities.
 - House needs simple majority to advance bills.
 - Senate needs 60 votes to advance bills.
 - *The final bill must be approved by both bodies of Congress.




41

"One Big Beautiful Bill Act" (OBBBA!)

"Trifecta" government: White House & both chambers of Congress. Enables partisan "reconciliation" bills. (ACA, TCJA, ARPA)

Impacts on education.

- New (first) federal voucher program.
- New restrictions on federal student loan programs.
- Deep cuts and changes to Medicaid program.
- Deep cuts to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

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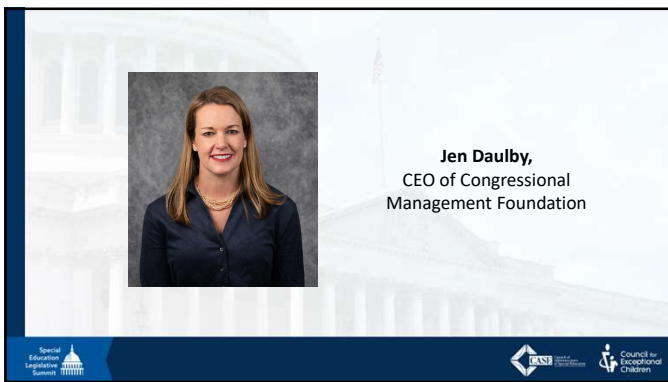
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Today's Training

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

Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

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Understanding the Hill Meeting Landscape

Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

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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

In-Person Issue Visits from Constituents	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
Contact from Constituents' Reps	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
Individualized Email Messages	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
Individualized Postal Letters	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
Local Editorial Referencing Issue Pending	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
Comments During Telephone Town Hall	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
Phone Calls	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
Letter to the Editor Referencing Your Boss	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
Visit From a Lobbyist	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
Form Email Messages	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
Groups Social Media Platforms	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
Your Office's Social Media Platforms	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
Form Postal Letters	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
Petitions	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
Postcards	<div><div></div><div></div></div>

A Lot of Positive Influence

Some Positive Influence

51

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)

Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

52

...and so is space.

Inside the office

LEGISLATIVE TEAM

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

CHEF OF STAFF'S OFFICE

MEMBERS' OFFICE

Main entrance to the reception room

Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

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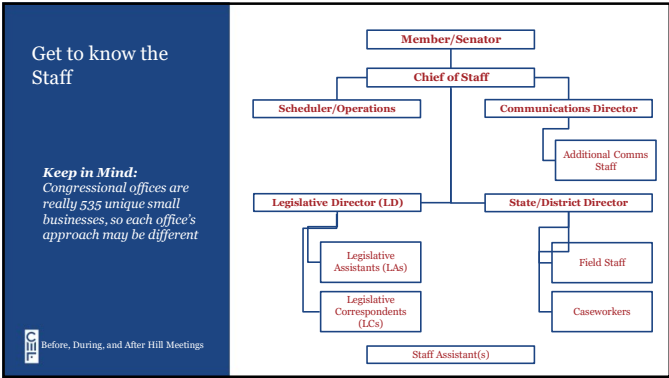
Politics and Pandemics Have Created an Experience Gap

- 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

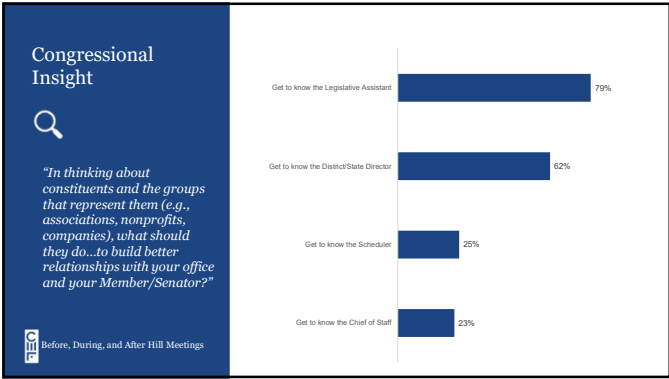
Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

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55



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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, During, and After Hill Meetings

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Before the Meeting




 Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

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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


 Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

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What we've heard



"...have as much information in your initial meeting request as possible."



Former Scheduler

 Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

60

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

Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

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Congressional
Insight

Q

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

Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

More than 6 Weeks

6%

5-6 Weeks

29%

3-4 Weeks

43%

1-2 Weeks

22%

62

Overview of Typical Scheduling Review Process

Request Received

Alternate Terms Proposed

Reviewed by Scheduler

Reviewed by Senior Staff

Meeting Accepted

Member Level

Staff Level

Additional Info Requested

Meeting Declined

Attempts to Reschedule

Outside Events

63

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

Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

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Congressional
Insight

Q

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

-House Scheduler

Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

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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.

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.

Before, During, and After Hill Meetings


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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.

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

 Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

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Congressional Insight



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

-Senior Legislative Assistant

 Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

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During the Meeting



 Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

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Tips for Productive Meetings

C

P

H

Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

Be Clear on the 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.

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Congressional Insight

C

P

H

Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

Q

"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.

71

Congressional Insight

C

P

H

Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

Q


"How frequently do you experience the following in constituent meetings?"

87%

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

72

What Policymakers Want to Know


 Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

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?

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Tips for Productive Meetings


 Before, During, and After Hill 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.

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Tips for Productive Meetings

 Before, During, and After Hill 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.

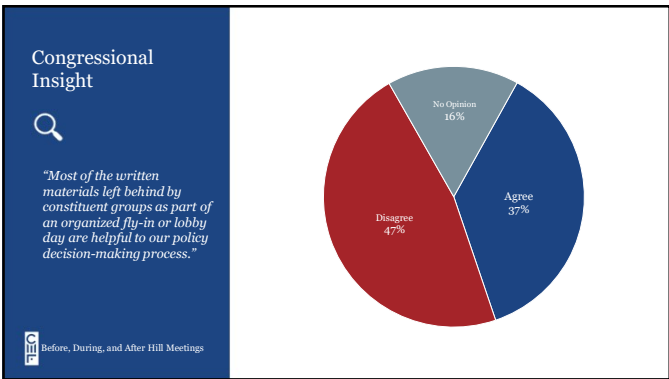
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A Framework	Provide Context	"In our community there are..."
	Explain the Need	"If x happens, then y..."
	Add Details that Connect to Member/District	"This is how this issue is impacting me..." "A family I work with in our district is having this experience..."
	Make The Ask / Thank for Acting	"We can fix this problem and make things better, if..." "Thank you all you've already done, please continue to be a champion for..."

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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.

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Congressional
Insight

Q

Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

“PLEASE do not bring me glossy folders with tons of background information! It’s going right **in the recycle bin!**”

-Legislative Director

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Congressional
Insight

Q

Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

“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.”

Material Type	Very/ Somewhat Helpful	Not Very Helpful
Leave behind 1-2 page issue summary	94%	6%
Follow-up email with attachments of material	86%	14%
Leave behind 5 page or greater length research report	18%	82%

80

After the Meeting

Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

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Congressional
Insight

Q

 Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

“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

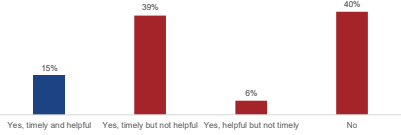
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Congressional
Insight

Q

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


 Before, During, and After Hill Meetings



Response	Percentage
Yes, timely and helpful	15%
Yes, timely but not helpful	39%
Yes, helpful but not timely	6%
No	40%

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Tips for Email
Follow Up

 Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

First, remember your audience...

- **Overwhelming Volume:** Staff face an overwhelming number of emails daily
- **Need for Prioritization:** Staff must balance timeliness, urgency, relevance, and alignment with current legislative priorities, often limiting individualized responses and making quick replies challenging.
- **Overcoming Noise:** Advocates should craft clear, concise, and targeted messages to increase the chances of being heard amidst the high volume.

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Tips for Email Follow Up

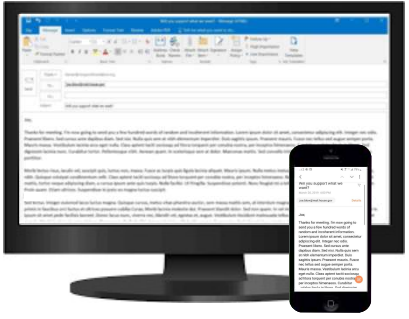
Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

- The subject line is VERY important and must be concise, shoot for less than 9 words.
- Remember, quick follow-ups are most impactful and relevant
- 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. (Format accordingly)
- A cheerful and thankful tone will go a long way.

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Email:
✗
Not like this.

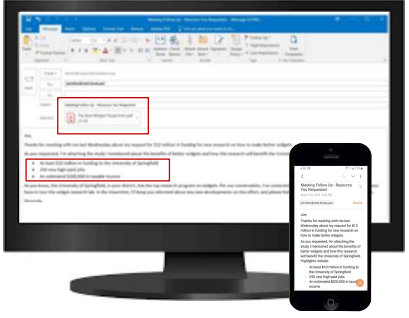
Before, During, and After Hill Meetings



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Email:
✓
Like this!

Before, During, and After Hill Meetings



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Follow Up is
Critically Important

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

Builds Relationships: Regular follow-up helps establish a rapport 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.

 Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

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Q & A



 Before, During, and After Hill Meetings

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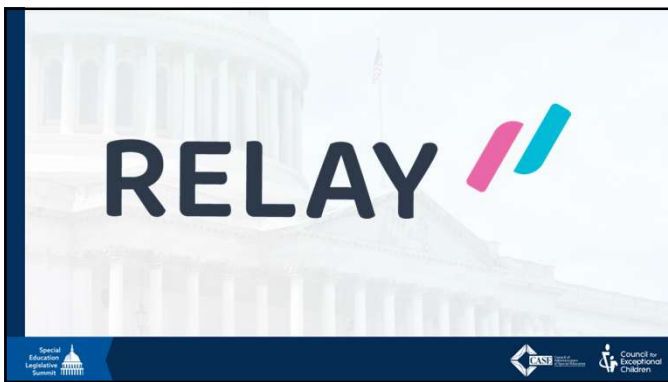
Thank You

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MANAGEMENT
FOUNDATION

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