

How to Have an Effective Lobby Visit

Colin Martinez Longmore

Grassroots Mobilization Education and Outreach Specialist

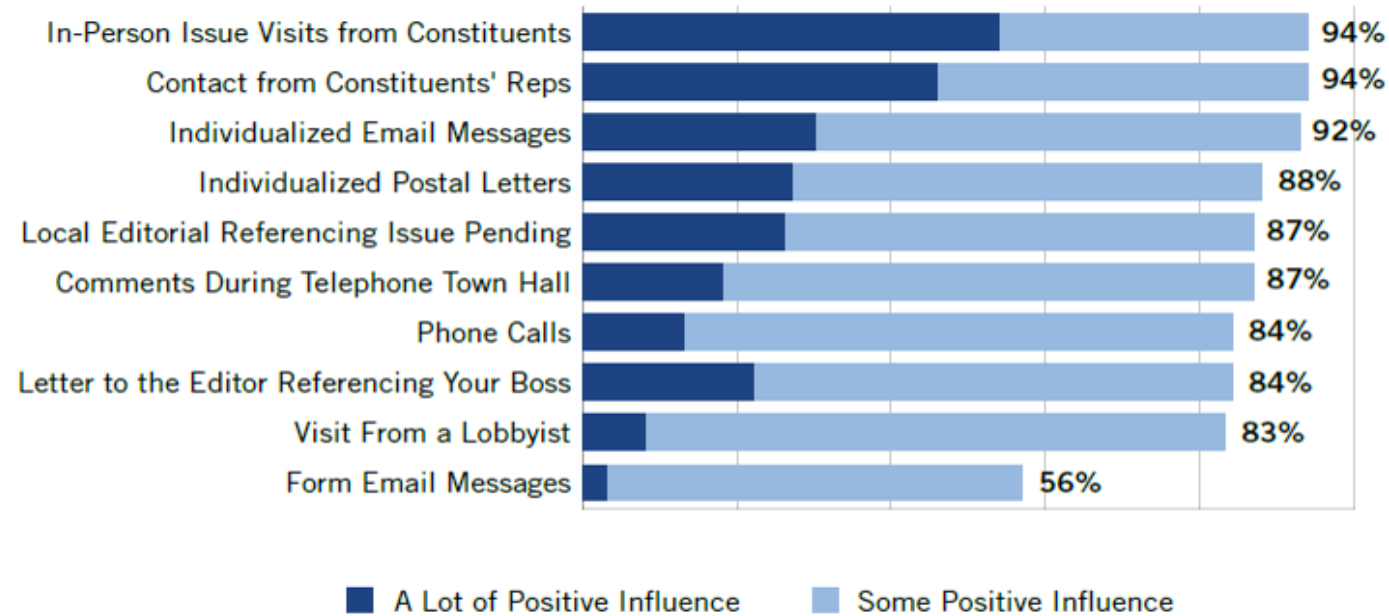
Overview

We will be discussing:

- ☀️ Your role as a constituent with staff
- ☀️ The importance of faith, values, and storytelling
- ☀️ Lobby Visit Order and Pro Tips
- ☀️ Follow Up

The Most Influential Communications

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 the *Washington office* have on his/her decision?



(n = 190-192)

Source: Congressional Management Foundation 2015 survey of congressional staff, including Chiefs of Staff, Communications Directors, Legislative Directors, and Legislative Assistants.

The Hill Visit

An Ambassador for NETWORK and a Local Voice

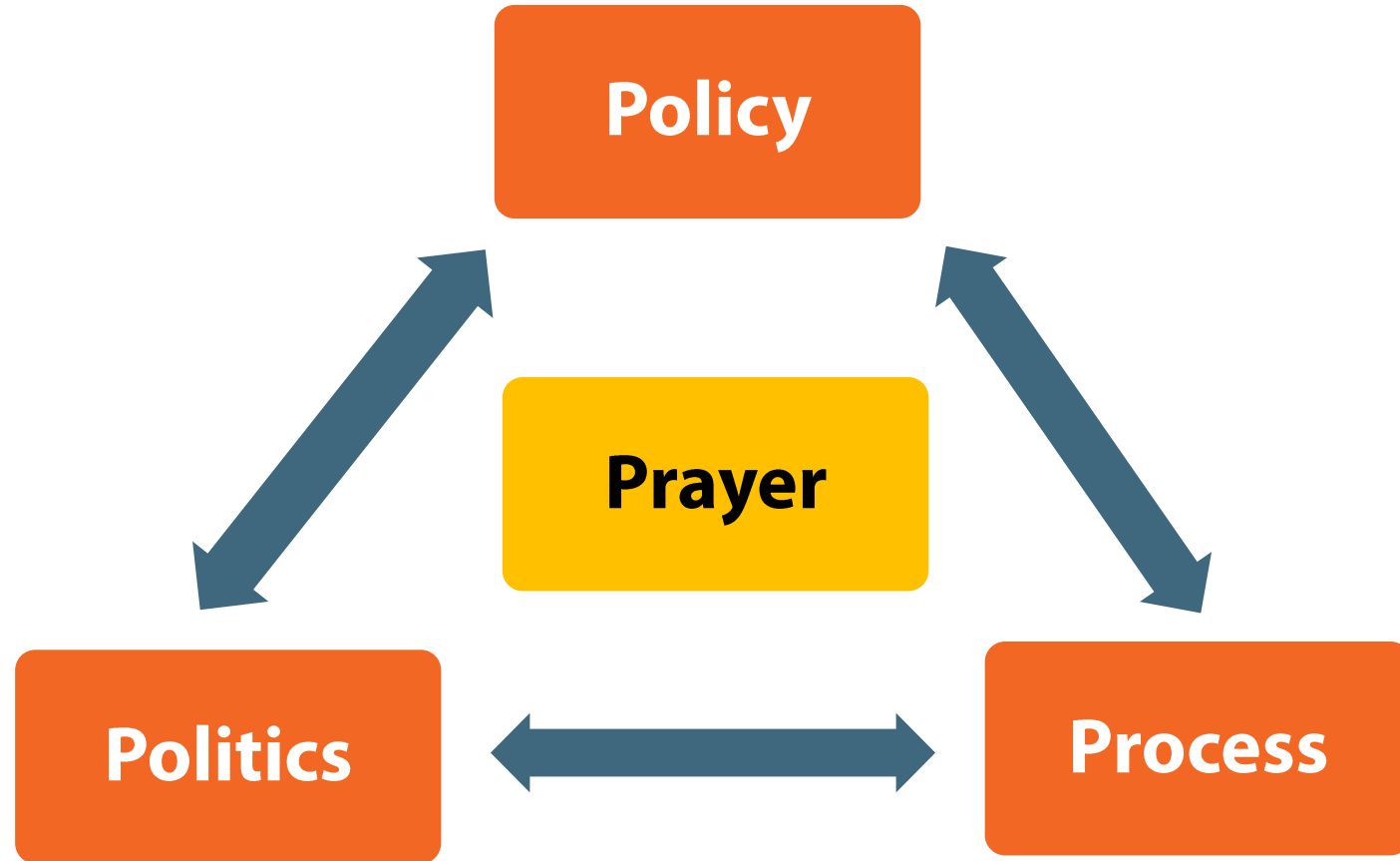
- ☀️ Your participation in NETWORK's Virtual Lobby Days on the Hill is helping build organizational clout with Senators
- ☀️ You are sharing NETWORK's works on Sentencing Reform and Criminal Legal Systems
- ☀️ You are sharing why you, the constituents, care about this issue
- ☀️ You are representing your community

The Hill Visit

Background on Hill Staff

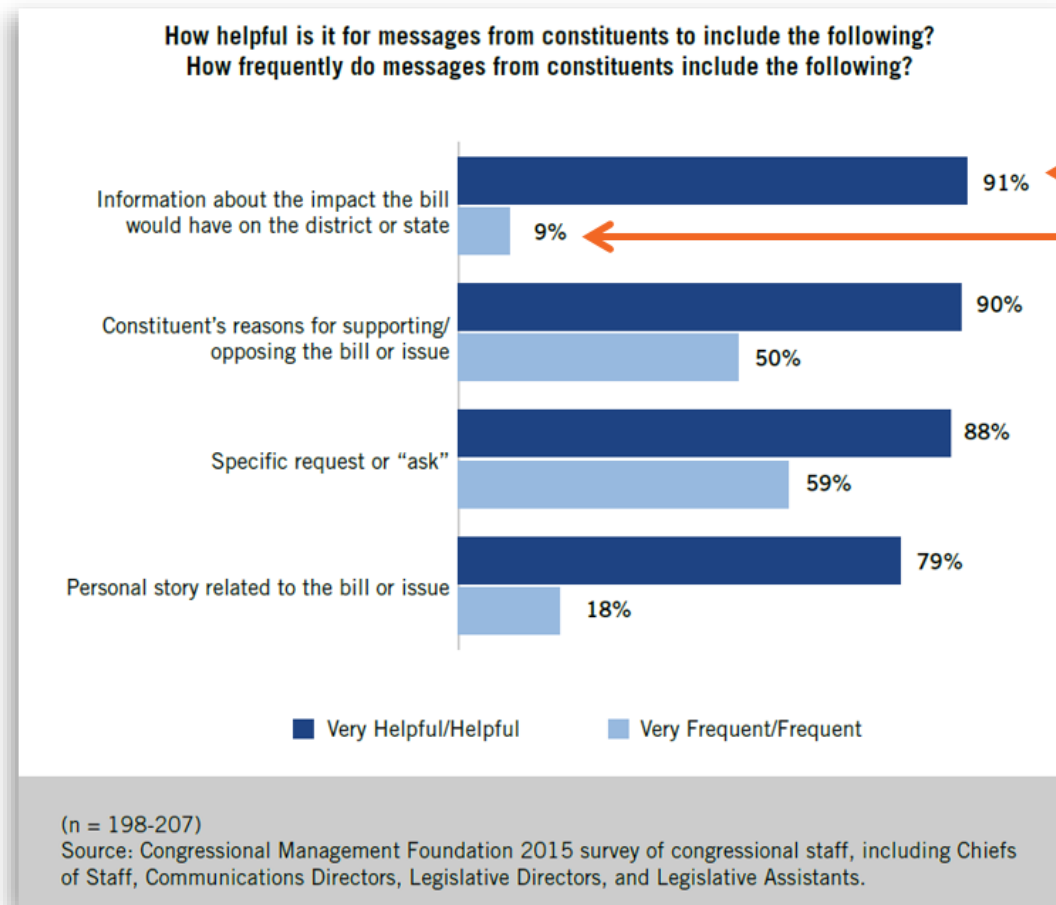
- ☀️ Specialize in a few issues
- ☀️ Often author legislation
- ☀️ Are policy strategists
- ☀️ Often are not from the home district or even the state
- ☀️ ***Need to learn why the legislation is important to you and your community!***

The 3 "4 P's" Analysis



Personalized and Local Information

Advocates are more influential and contribute to better public policy when they provide personalized and local information to Congress.



**Disconnect
between what is
wanted and
received**

Using Faith/Morality

- ☀ Using your faith as the basis for your visit should be considered a strength
- ☀ Not every member of your lobby teams need to be of the same faith, or even of any faith at all
- ☀ Be authentic



Storytelling

- ☀️ You are able to talk about the real impact of policies from your lived experiences
- ☀️ This perspective is new and vital to the Senator's office
- ☀️ While a member or the staff may be able to argue about data, they cannot dispute experiences



Preparing to Lobby

- ☀ Think about why you are in the room. Why is Sentencing Reform important to **you**? Why is passing these four pieces of legislation important to **you**?
- ☀ Research your Member of Congress. *Why might they want to support these pieces of legislation?*
- ☀ Review NETWORK's leave behind and talking points
- ☀ If you're in a group, assign roles for during the visit
- ☀ Practice your talking points and prepare for a conversation
- ☀ Check your technology, internet connection, etc. to make sure that you're set for the visit

COVID-era Lobby Tips

We will be discussing:

- ☀ Zoom visits allow greater accessibility for constituents
- ☀ Introduce constituent's names, locations and organizations into the chat and do a round robin of names at the start
- ☀ You can pack the Zoom room to show support but only assign 3-4 speakers
- ☀ Don't miss the chance to answer "How are you handling the pandemic?" within a policy context.

Before the Meeting Begins

- ☀️ Meet with your entire team before the scheduled meeting to review roles
- ☀️ Make sure that you can see your leave behind and talking points
- ☀️ Silence all distractions (Close email, Skype, social media, etc.)
- ☀️ If you're on Zoom, rename yourself so that the staff person can see your name and organization
- ☀️ Ask the staffer how much time they have at the start of the meeting!

Lobby Meeting Order

- ☀️ **Brief** Introduction
- ☀️ Let Staff/Member know if you are a Constituent
- ☀️ Thanks (say something positive about Member – requires research)
- ☀️ Introduce the issues you are lobbying on
 - Include faith/moral component
 - Include racial equity framework
- ☀️ Listen carefully for the Member's position

Lobby Meeting Order

Make the policy asks

- Will you support the EQUAL Act (S. 79) by:
 - Signing on as a co-sponsor (if they haven't already)
 - Inviting colleagues to become co-sponsors
 - Calling for the bill to be voted out of Judiciary Committee
 - Urging fellow Senators to support passage of the bill

Lobby Meeting Order

Make the policy asks

- Will you support the First Step Implementation Act (S. 1014), the Prohibiting Punishment of Acquitted Conduct Act (S. 601), and COVID-19 Safe Detention Act (S. 312) by:
 - Signing on as a co-sponsor (if they haven't already)
 - Inviting colleagues to become co-sponsors
 - Urging fellow Senators to support passage of the bill

During Your Meeting

BE SURE TO ASK:

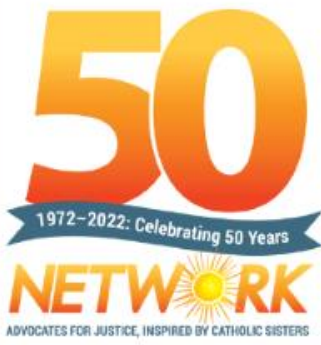
- ☀ For the staff member(s) email address
- ☀ How you can support the Member of Congress
- ☀ When the Member of Congress will be hosting a town hall or have in-district recess
- ☀ Is there anything the staff member needs (besides NETWORK materials) for follow-up?

Tips About Tone

- ☀️ Avoid direct antagonism in your criticism
- ☀️ Be polite, yet firm, when explaining your position and proposed solution
- ☀️ Don't be afraid to say "I don't know" or "I can get back to you"
- ☀️ Make sure your "ask" is clear and concise

After Your Meeting

- ☀️ Debrief with your group—what went well? What did we hear? We did we learn?
- ☀️ Send a thank-you email to the staffers within 24 hours of the meeting with leave behinds attached
- ☀️ Include the policy ask and any information you promised to send
- ☀️ Share your photo on social media—or send to NETWORK to share—and tag the Member of Congress
- ☀️ Fill out NETWORK's Lobby Report Back Form



Questions?

Thank you!

