

# **Advocacy Day: Information for First-Time Attendees**

**February 2019**

**Producer**

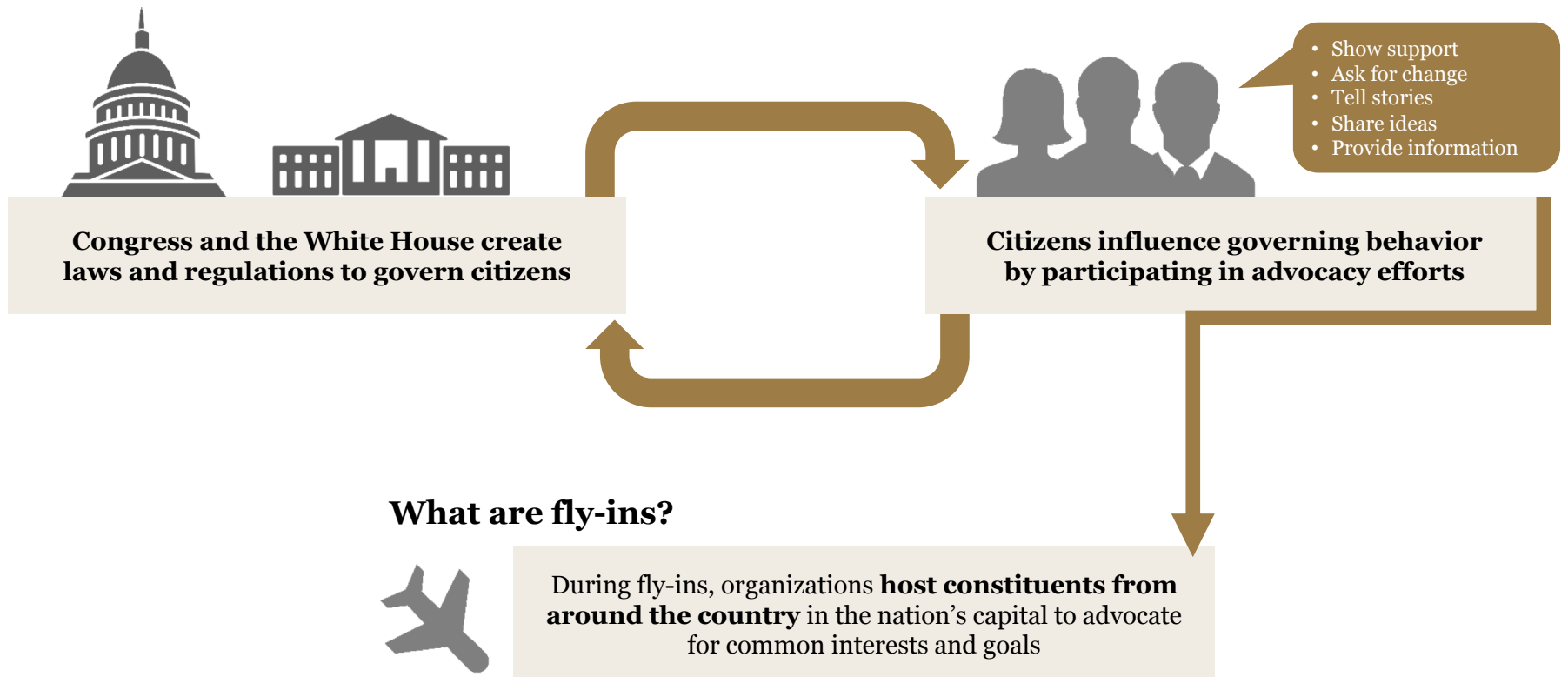
*Presentation Center*

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# Roadmap

- Contextualizing fly-in advocacy
  - Learn about members of Congress and staff
  - Quick review of the legislative process
  - Before, during and after Hill meetings
  - Finding your way around Capitol Hill
-

# How does constituent advocacy in Washington work?



# Members of Congress want to hear from you



## Members value staying in touch with constituents...

- Constituent conversations guide policymaking
- Reelection hinges on their ability to serve the constituents who vote them into office
- Members trust their staff to help them listen to constituents, so advocates should not be surprised if they meet with staff in lieu of a member



## ...and find personal communications persuasive...

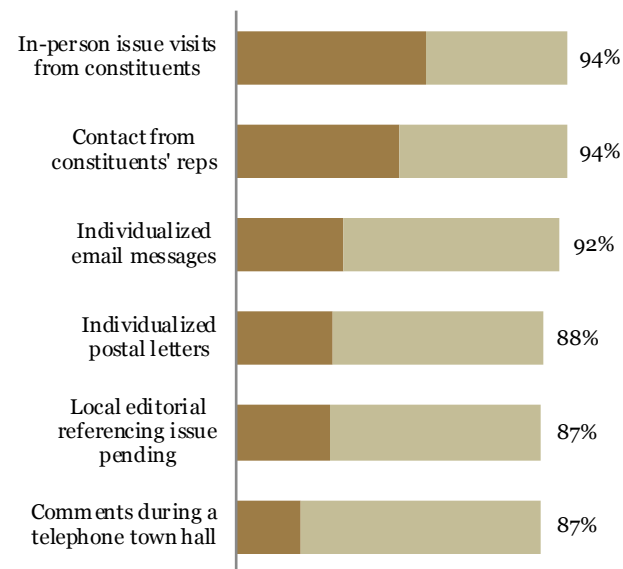
- Individual letters and e-mails can have greater influence on member decision-making than form letters
- Advocates should focus on sending more personal messages to their member of Congress to capture their individual voice or perspective



## ...but visitors with first-hand knowledge of policy impacts are most compelling

### Influence of advocacy strategies directed at a Member's/Senator's Washington office

*\*Asked of Chiefs of Staff, Comms. Directors, Legislative Directors/Assistants*

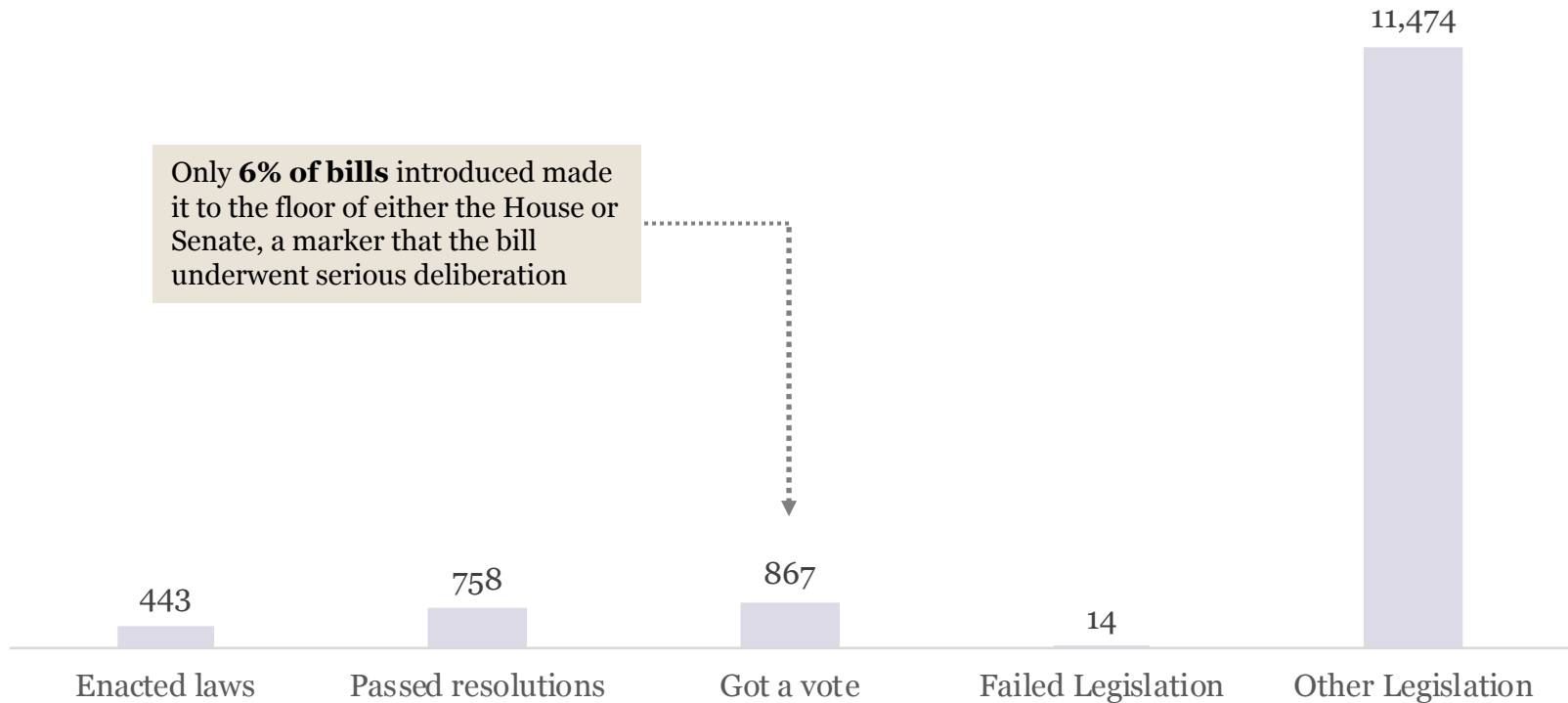




# Success in the advocacy space can take time as legislation can slowly move through Congress

## Bills and resolutions in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress

BY FINAL STATUS



# Roadmap

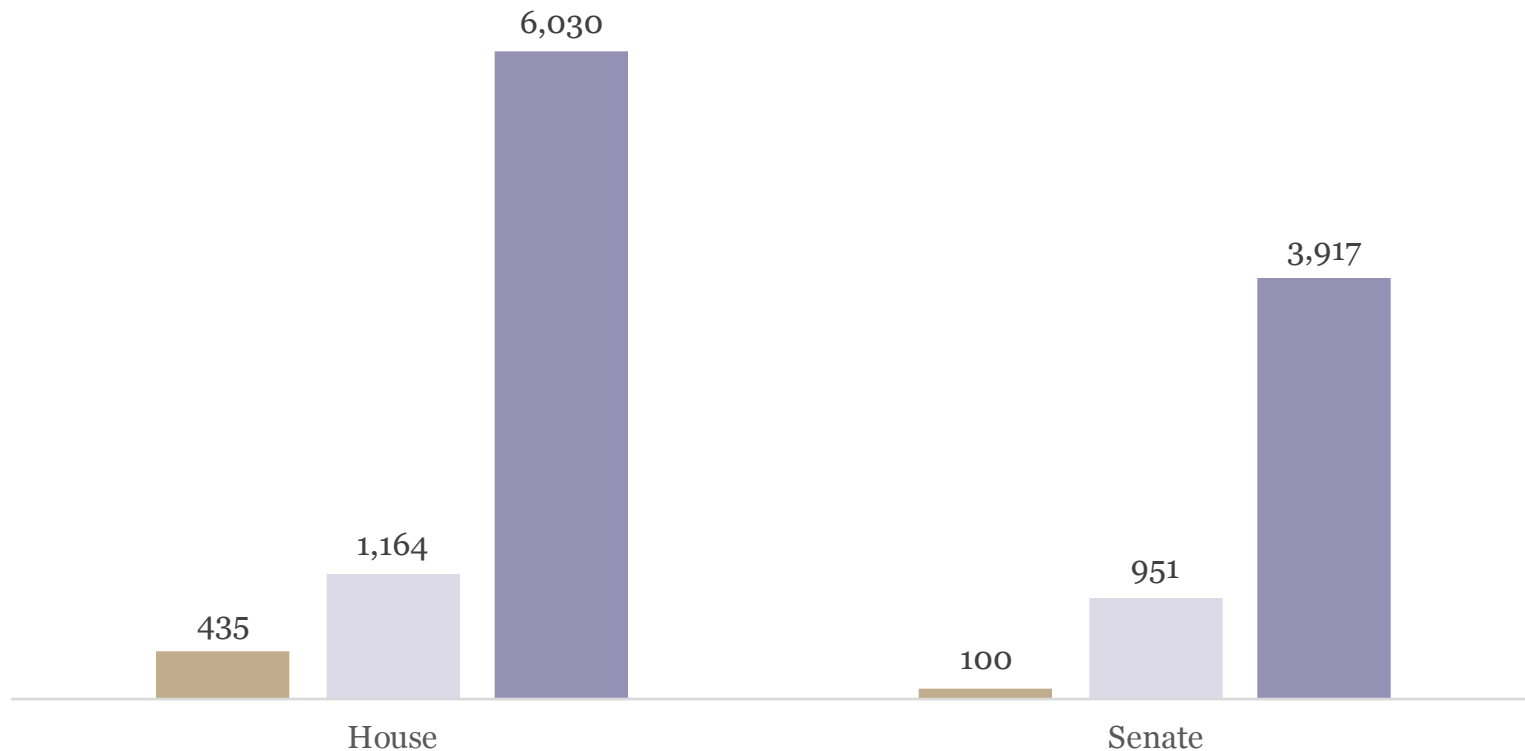
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# Hill staffers significantly outnumber members of Congress

## Members and staff of Congress

AS OF 2015

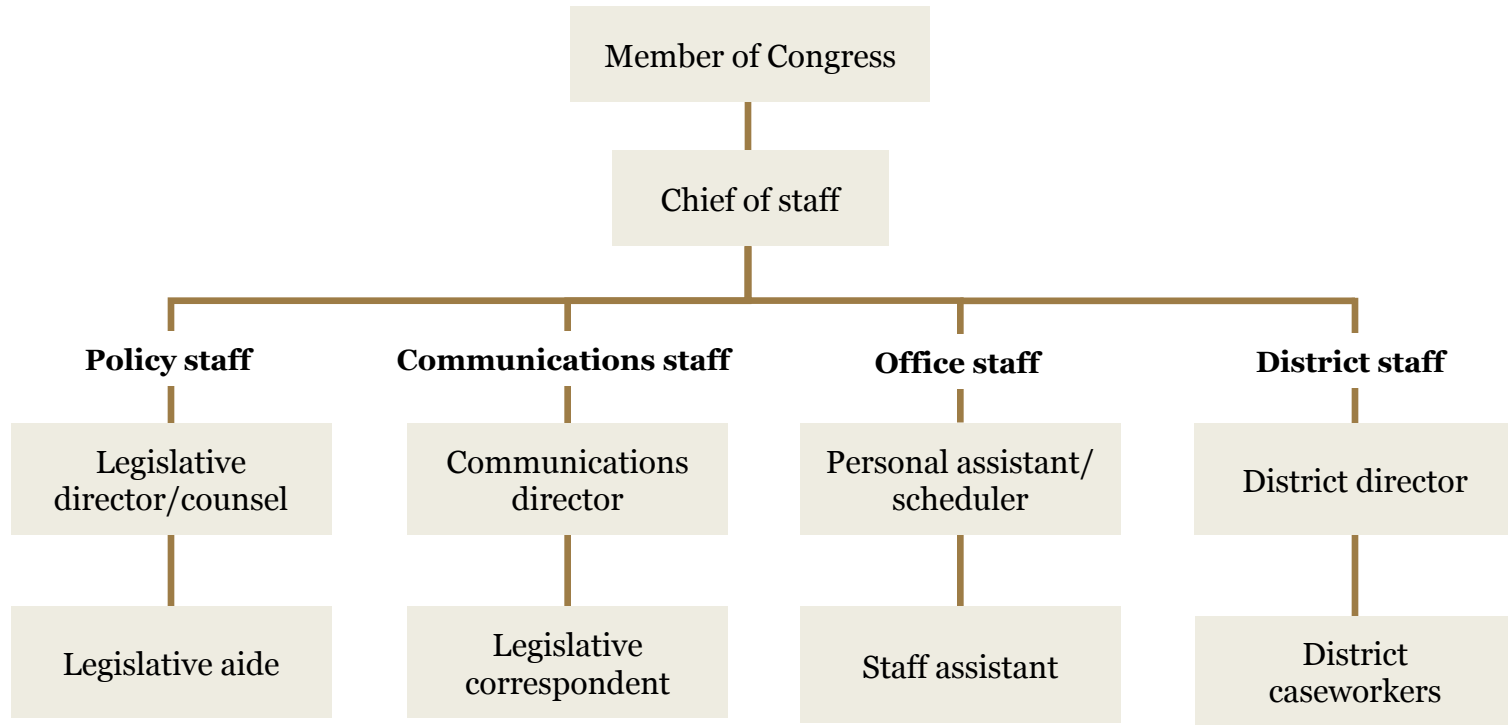
■ Members   ■ Congressional Committee Staff   ■ Personal Office Staff



Sources: "Vital statistics on congress," Brookings Institute, May 21, 2018.

# Expect to speak to staffers during meetings on the Hill

## Sample organizational structure of a congressional office



members of Congress have busy schedules – staffers will often have more time to devote to Hill meetings and be more capable of affecting any takeaway

# Staffers tend to have more time to meet with constituents than members of Congress



## Member of Congress

Members tend to be highly overscheduled; they average 70-hour weeks in D.C., often achieved by double-booking meetings



## Chief of staff

Visitors may not realize how often chiefs are in communication with a Member; the tight bond means that chiefs are often delegated to speak for the Member to constituents



## Legislative director

LDs tend to be specialists in the policies of the committees on which the Member serves; they may focus less on other areas



## Legislative assistant

LAs tend to be young; their average age is under 29



## Legislative correspondent/staff assistant

LCs and SAs tend to be even younger than LAs, often recent college grads

*It is not uncommon for members to show up halfway through a meeting or leave part of the way through*

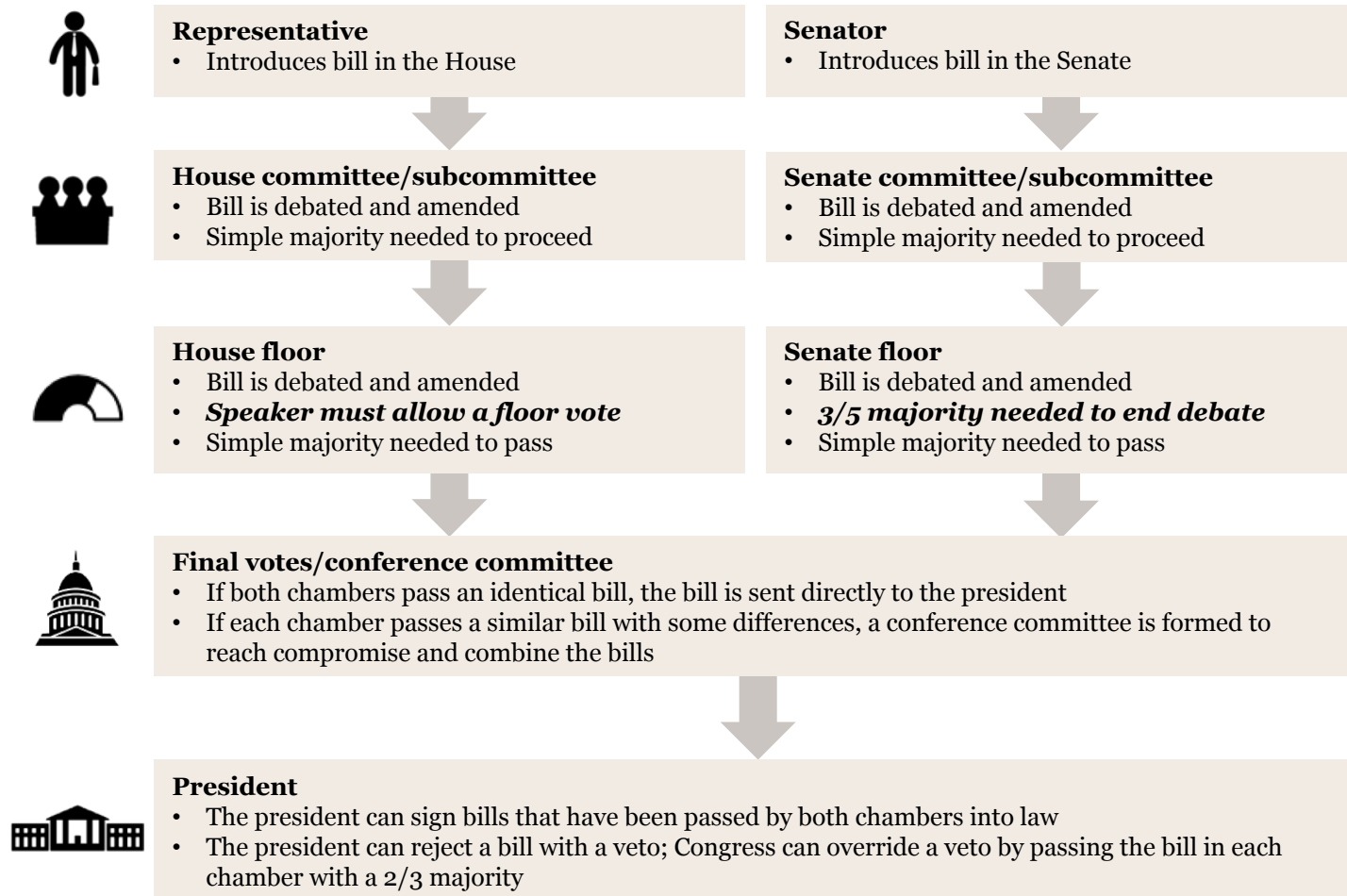
*Meetings are most often scheduled with and run through one or more of these staffers*

*LCs/SAs may join in meetings as a junior staffer or note-taker*

# Roadmap

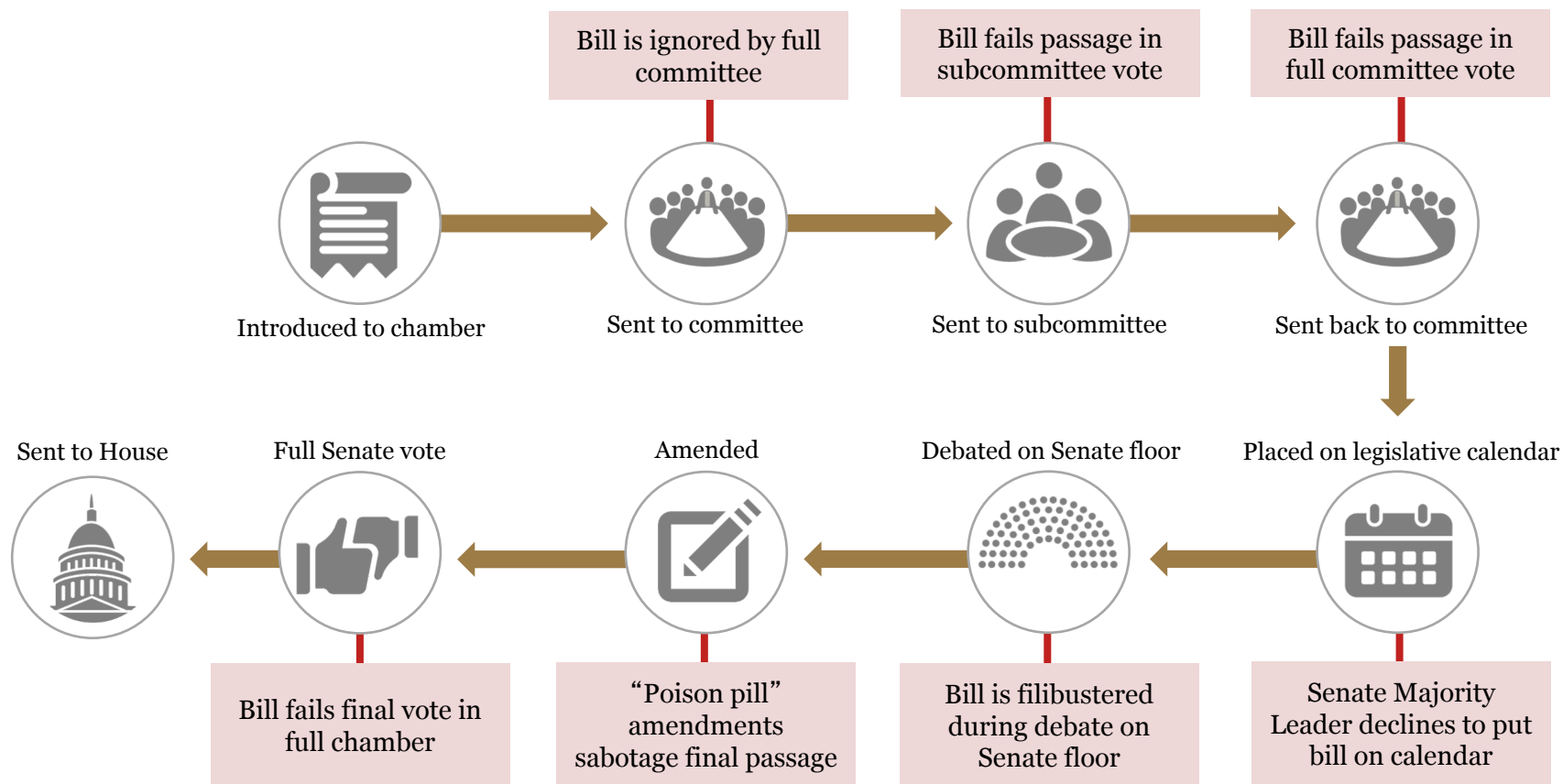
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# Legislative process: how a bill becomes a law



# Bills face numerous obstacles to passage in House and Senate

Though the hypothetical bill below begins in the Senate, a bill arising in the House may face the same hurdles.

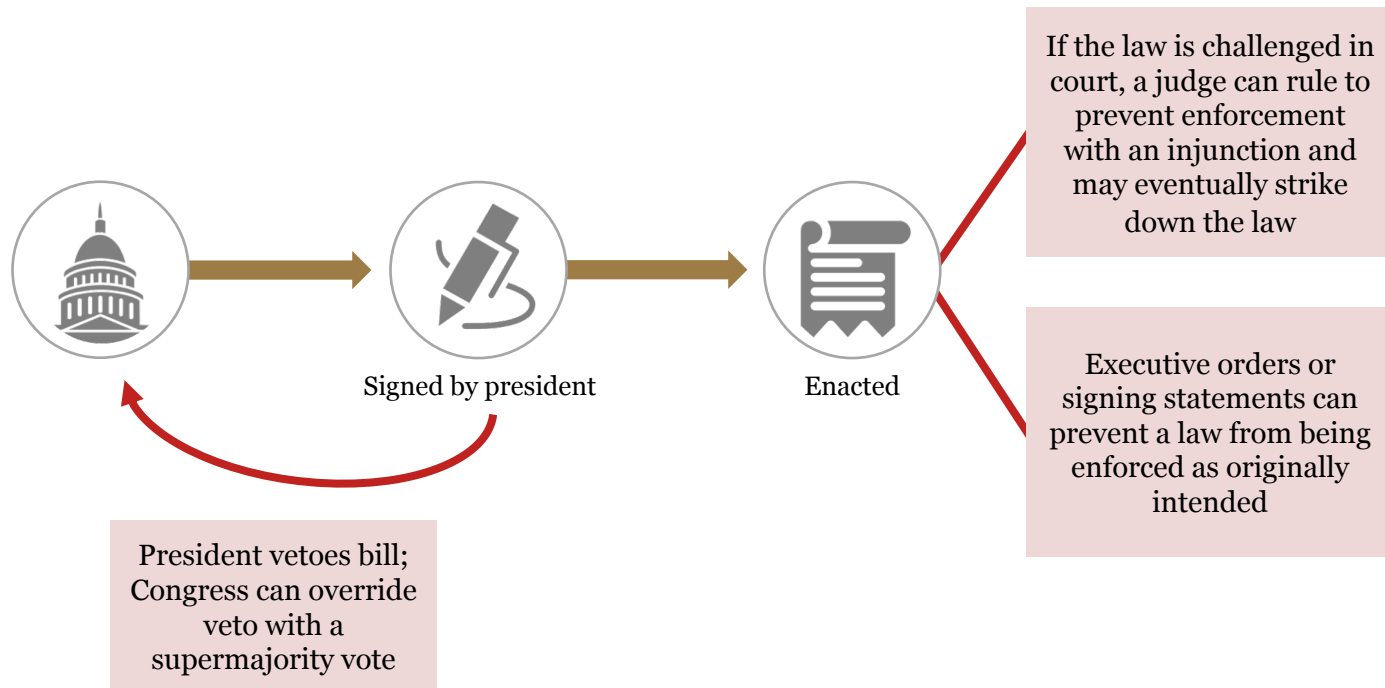


- The Senate relies on unanimous consent to operate efficiently; therefore, individual Senators have the power to delay or prevent a bill's passage by creating additional procedural hurdles, including filibusters.



## Even after passage, bills may face hurdles

*A bill may pass both the House and Senate but still face enormous challenges, either before or after it is formally enacted.*

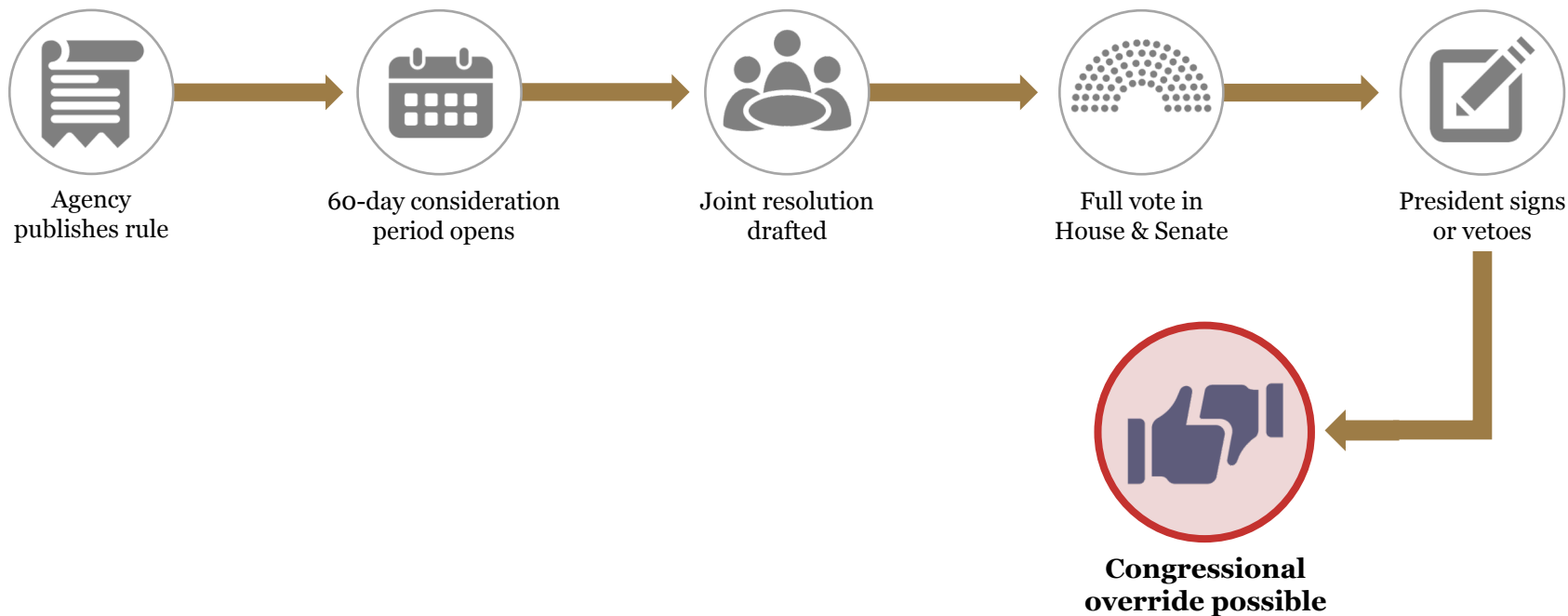


- Even if a bill manages to pass both chambers of Congress, the president can use vetoes, executive orders or signing statements to prevent the bill from being enacted or enforced
- Opponents of the bill, including those outside of the legislative process, can prevent the law from being enacted by mounting a successful legal challenge

## Overturing rules with the Congressional Review Act

**The Congressional Review Act (CRA)** is an oversight tool that Congress may use to overturn a rule issued by a federal agency. The CRA was included as part of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (SBREFA), which was signed into law on March 29, 1996. The CRA requires agencies to report their rulemaking activities to Congress and provides Congress with a special set of procedures under which to consider legislation to overturn those rules.

### Overview of the CRA process



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# The Heart of any Good Policy Story is an Individual

*But too many organizations prioritize the issue—or themselves.*

## Perspectives on Proper Story Focal Points

### Personal Arguments Outweigh Economic Ones

“If you can tell a personal story, **tie it to an actual human being** who is affected by the care—instead of necessarily linking it to employment—that is an **easier way to cut through**... it gives the Member a reason to go out there and become a champion.

Those stories give them the one-minutes on the floor or talking points at a press conference. The most **effective messages** are ones that **go beyond economic impact** and **talk about** the impact that they are having on **people’s everyday lives**. I’m not discounting the economics but the human element is more memorable.”

—Chief of Staff, House

### Distinctions between Corporations and People

“We **hear all the time** that some **regulation is going to put a company out of business**... Most people in government see corporations as not being people. I think the best way to get to that is to tell a good story, with real information, real facts. Otherwise there are a lot of people in government who don’t ever get past the corporate angle; this **isn't going to hurt that person** at all, it's **just** going to be **the company**.”

—Federal Executive, Department of Labor

### Start with the End in Mind

“There is a person at the end of the pipeline. There is a **human being** that is **interacting with your product, or service or industry**, and you start there. Not at the industry level, not at the lobbyist level. **Start at the person level**.”

—Brad Fitch, Congressional Management Foundation

# Prepping for a face-to-face meeting with a Member of Congress

Prior to meeting a Member of Congress or their staff, evaluate their priorities and any current activities related to your issue. Consider how you might convey the following elements in telling your story, highlighting your personal connection to their office.

## 1: Geographic connection



Introduce your geographic connection and convey appreciation for their work.

*“We appreciate Congressman Smith’s efforts on behalf of families in Rochester and I’d like to share my story, because it illustrates why this issue is so critical now.”*

## 2: Issue connection



Summarize the Member’s connection to the issue in one sentence.

*“We know Congressman Smith is a strong supporter of paid family leave, as evidenced in her recent Twitter chat.”*

## 3: Urgency



Provide a one-sentence overview of why the story is important now (i.e., an upcoming vote or current events).

*“With the vote coming up, we wanted to make sure you had stories that demonstrate just how important her position on the issue is.”*

## 4: Additional details



Share your story and call-to-action, offering access to more information as appropriate.

*“While I’m here to talk about my experience, there are more at [www.strongfamilies.org](http://www.strongfamilies.org)... We hope our stories and data can assist Congressman Smith in the debate.”*

## 5: Future contact



Reference any upcoming outreach that will be taking place between your counterparts.

*“Our senior legislative director plans to connect with [name] to share more details about this campaign.”*

# Prepping for a face-to-face meeting with a Member of Congress

Advocates can leverage face-to-face meetings with members of Congress and their staff to communicate their positions and build enduring relationships with their representatives. However, meetings are brief and members are busy; advocates should keep the tips below in mind to get the most of their meetings.

## 1: Be on time



- Arrive no more than 5 minutes before the meeting; Hill offices are too small to accommodate lingering people, and Members are rarely available to meet earlier.
- Inform the scheduler if you are going to be late in case another meeting time must be arranged.

## 2: Be flexible



- Prepare to meet with either the Member or the member's staff; treat both with equal respect.
- If the Member arrives in the middle of your meeting, continue as usual; the Member will ask questions if needed.

## 3: Stay on topic



- Raise only the issue you scheduled to discuss with the Member and/or the Member's staff to keep the meeting focused and persuasive.

## 4: Keep politics out of it



- Do not discuss elections or campaign support in your meeting; it intimates that the Member is "for sale."
- Respect the Member's political views and relationships outside of the issue at hand.

## 5: Leave behind brief information

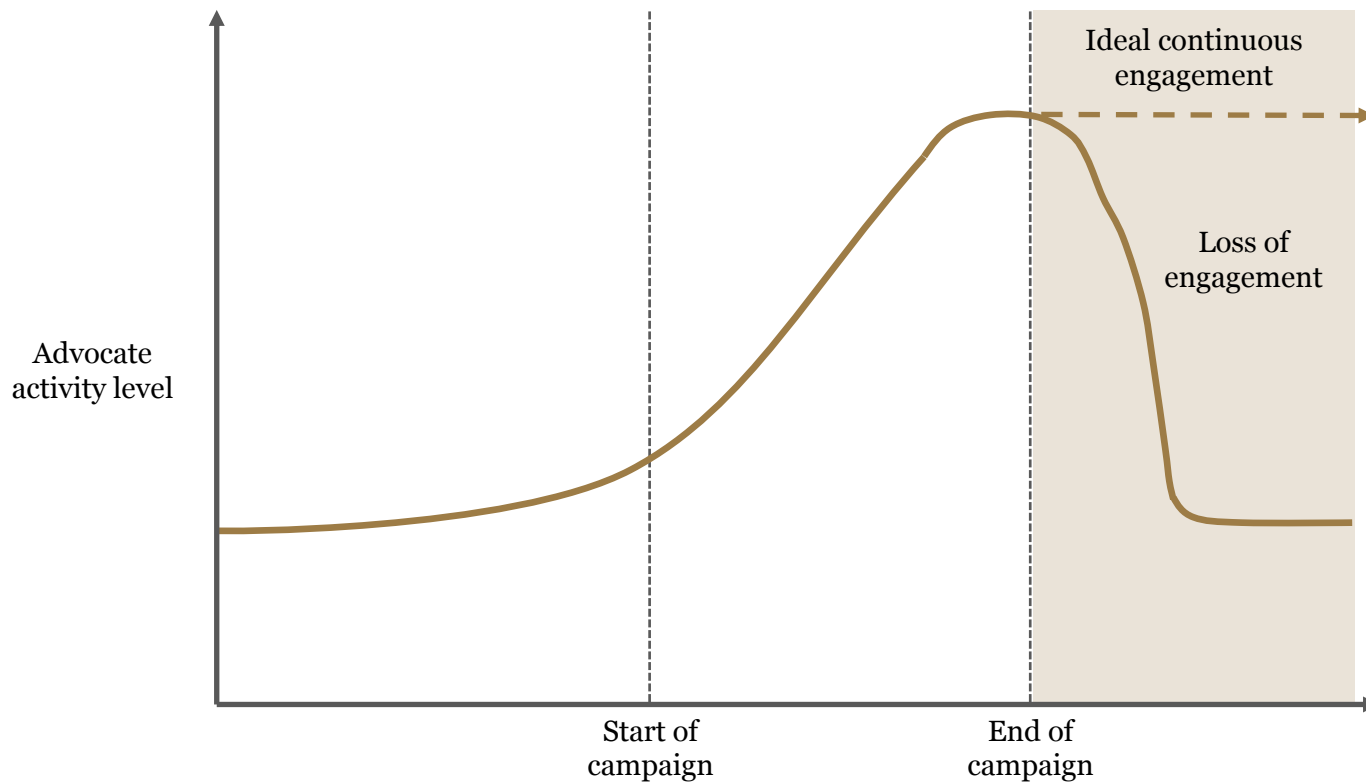


- Leave behind a 1-2 page briefing with data points on the issue discussed with the Member's office.
- The document should serve as a helpful resource for staff as the issue moves through Congress.

# Prepping for a face-to-face meeting with a Member of Congress

At the start of an advocacy campaign, momentum typically increases steadily, but many campaigns lose advocacy momentum and drop to previous engagement levels after the campaign ends. **Ideally, an organization would maintain momentum to ensure continuous engagement with advocacy efforts.**

Advocacy activity level over time (illustrative)



# Prepping for a face-to-face meeting with a Member of Congress

Advocates can become trusted resources for lawmakers and their staff by following up and keeping in touch with them after face-to-face meetings.



## Send a thank you message and valuable information

- Send a brief follow-up e-mail after meeting with the Member of Congress
- Thank the Member and/or staffer for their time
- Add a reminder of the meeting topic for the office's reference
- Include information from a reliable source to keep the office aware of your issue



## Attend events in the district

- Attend town hall meetings or other public events in your district to increase visibility with your Member of Congress
- Find opportunities to engage in policy matters in the district—including building relationships with district staff—to serve as trustworthy resource on your issue



## Stay in touch

- Do not over-communicate with Members, but do pass along new information about your issue as it is released
- Communicate with your representative—and their staff—in a respectful and informative manner to gain their respect for you and your points of view



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# Capitol Hill is a (relatively) small neighborhood

## Getting to the Hill



### By car

- Capitol Hill offers few public parking options; street parking is difficult
- The nearest garage is north of the Capitol, by Union Station
- Many visitors prefer to arrive by taxi or ridesharing service, available throughout the city
- Two of the most popular ridesharing services are Uber and Lyft, both available for download as phone applications



### By public transportation

- For most visitors, the Metro system will prove the best transportation bet
- The Red Line (subway) serves the north side of the Capitol, while the Blue, Orange, and Silver lines offer two stations to the south
- The Metrobus serves various points around the Hill; visit [WMATA.com](http://WMATA.com) to see detailed maps

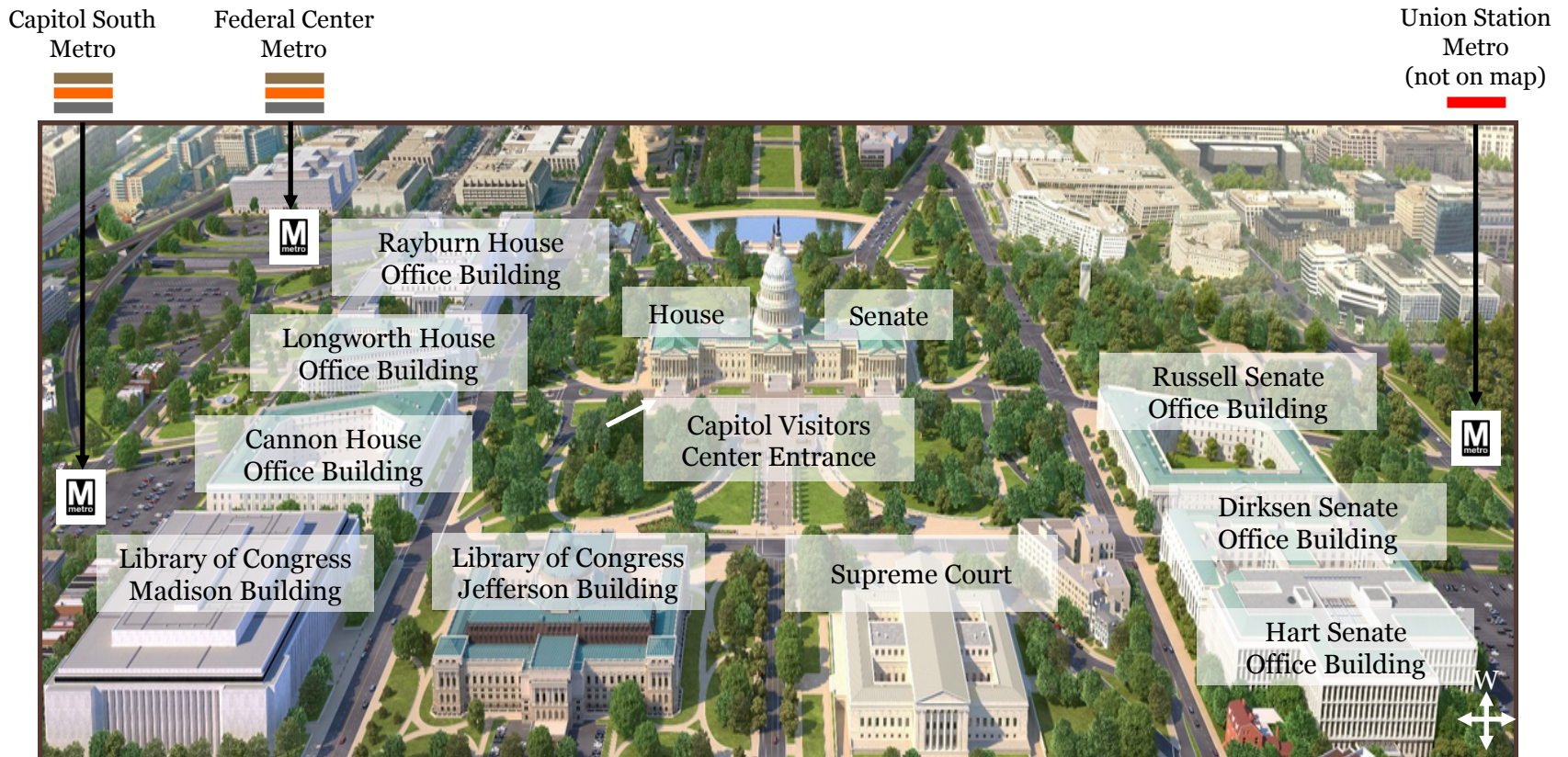


### By foot

- DC is a relatively walkable city
- However, hot and humid weather may make long walks inadvisable during the summer
- Bring an extra pair of shoes, bottle of water, and an umbrella to walk around the area comfortably

# House and Senate buildings sit on opposite sides of the Capitol building

Map of House and Senate office buildings



Sources: Architect of the Capitol, 2016; National Journal Research, 2019.

# Key Hill addresses are simple and formulaic

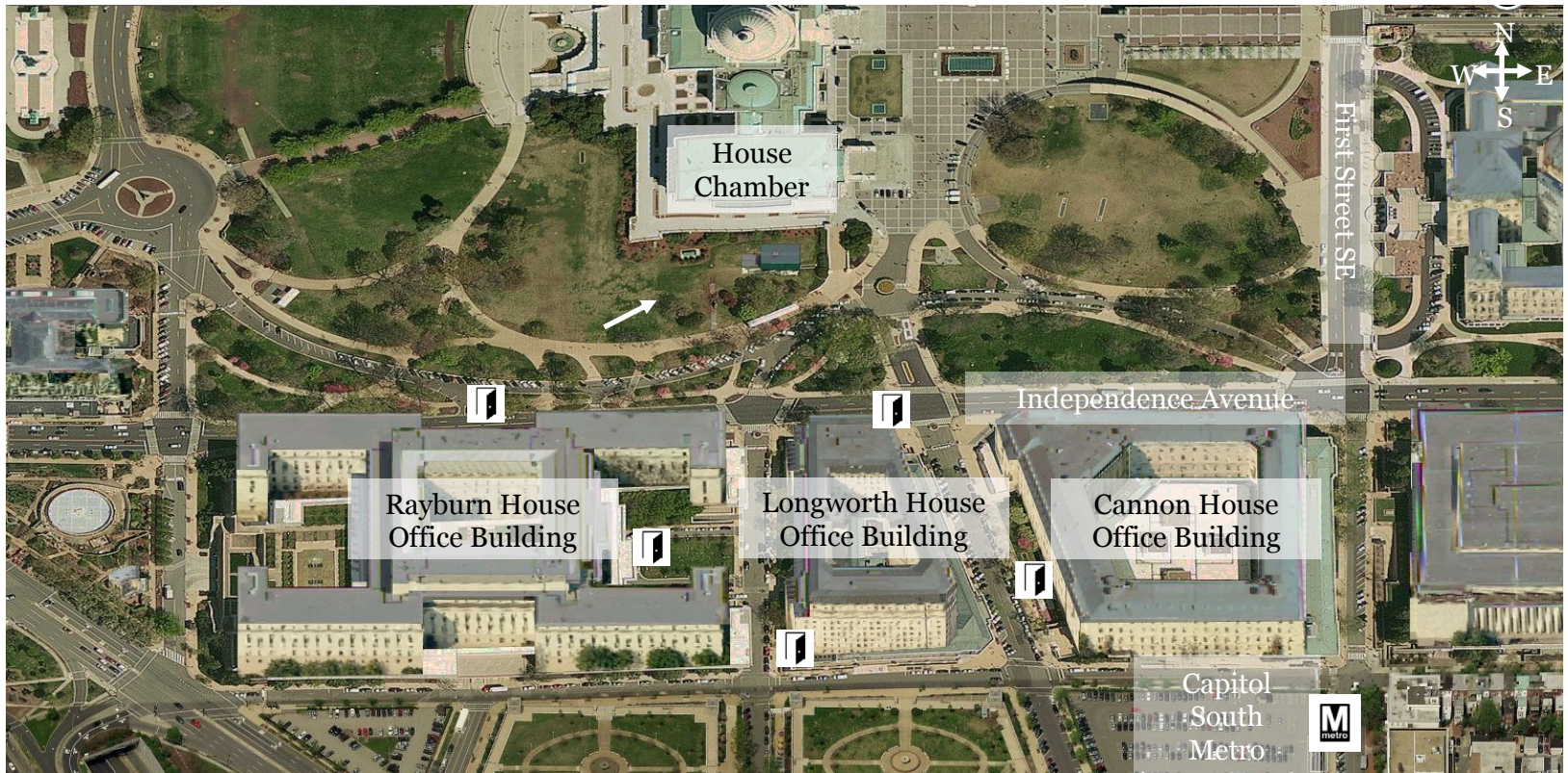
## Capitol Hill addresses

House side		Other		Senate side	
<b>Rayburn House Office Building</b>	50 Independence Ave, SW Washington, DC 20515	<b>Library of Congress</b>	101 Independence Ave SE, Washington, DC 20540	<b>Russell Senate Office Building</b>	2 Constitution Ave NE, Washington, DC 20002
<b>Longworth House Office Building</b>	15 Independence Ave, SW Washington, DC 20515	<b>Supreme Court</b>	1 First Street, NE Washington, DC 20543	<b>Dirksen Senate Office Building</b>	100 Constitution Ave NE Washington, DC 20002
<b>Cannon House Office Building</b>	25 Independence Ave, SE Washington, DC 20003	<b>Capitol Visitors Center</b>	First & East Capitol St SE, Washington, DC 20004	<b>Hart Senate Office Building</b>	150 Constitution Ave NE Washington, DC 20510
<b>Capitol South Metro</b>	307 First Street SE Washington, DC 20003	<b>Federal Center Metro</b>	401 3rd Street SW Washington, DC 20024	<b>Union Station Metro</b>	701 First St. NE Washington, DC 20002

Sources: Architect of the Capitol, 2016; National Journal Research, 2019.



# The geography of the House side



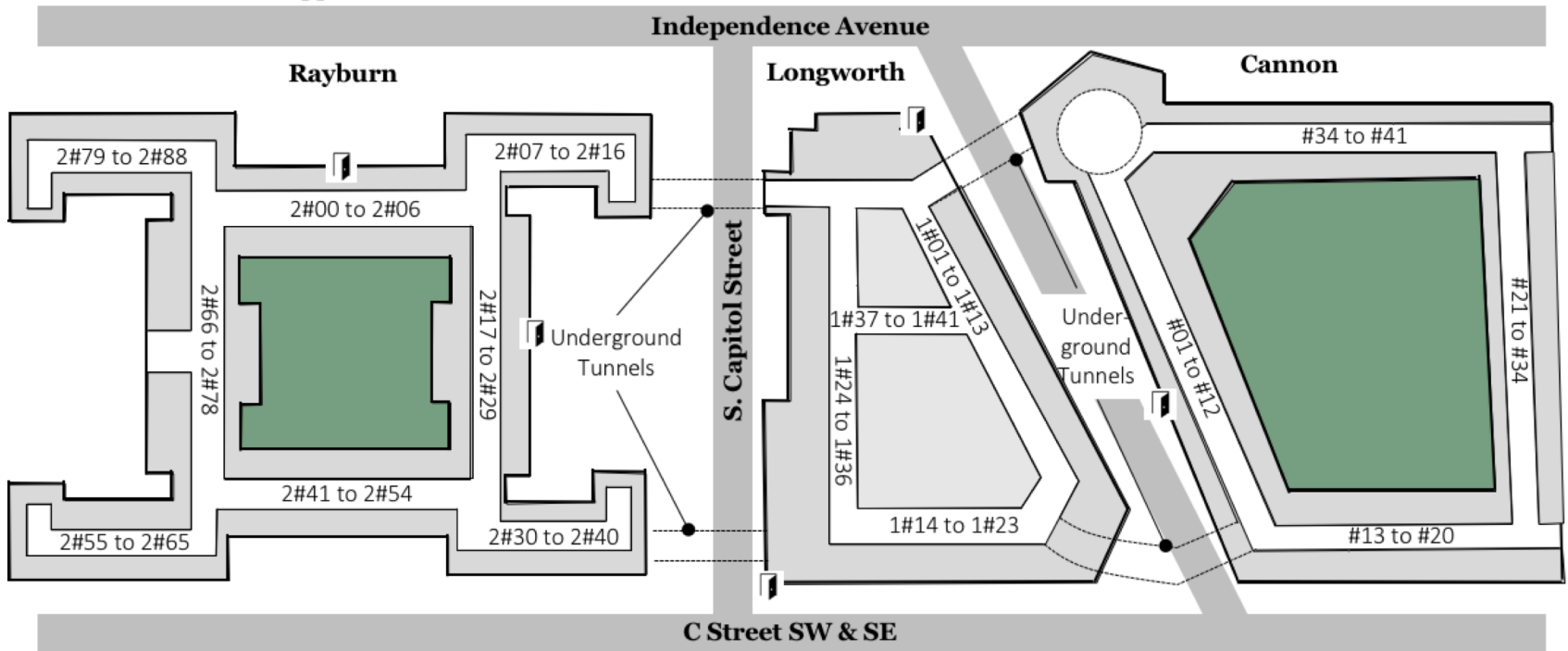
Building	Rayburn (RHOB)	Longworth (LHOB)	Cannon (CHOB)
Numbering system	All rooms are four digits; the first is always 2, the second indicates floor	All rooms are four digits; the first is always 1, the second indicates floor	All rooms are three digits; the first indicates floor
Example	Rep. Steve Cohen's office, 2104 RHOB, is on the first floor of Rayburn	Rep. Nancy Pelosi's office, 1236 LHOB, is on the second floor of Longworth	Rep. Haley Stevens' office, 227 Cannon HOB, is on the second floor of Cannon

Sources: Architect of the Capitol, 2016; National Journal Research, 2019.

# Inside the House office buildings

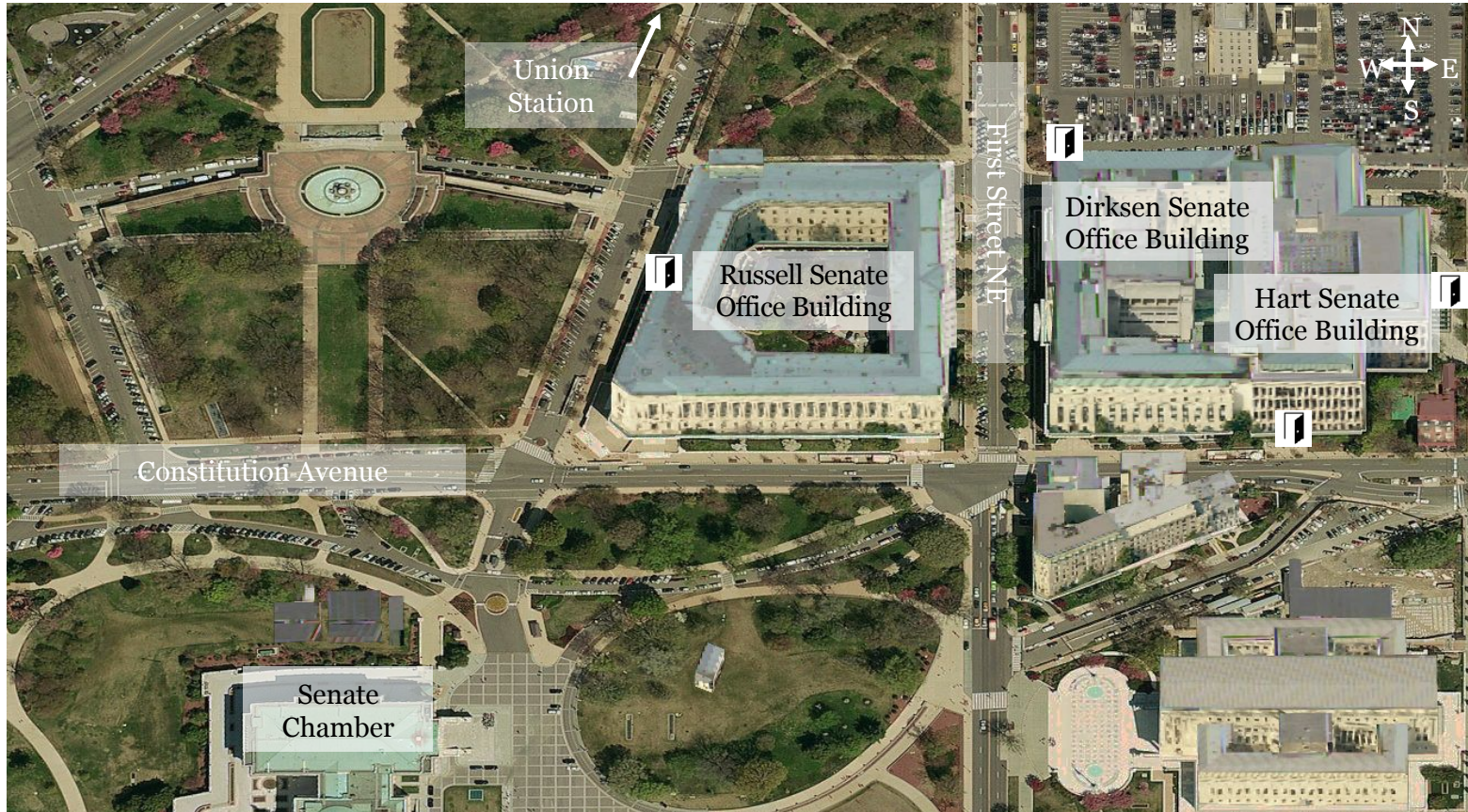
## Location and floor plan of the House office buildings

Public, handicapped accessible entrance





# The geography of the Senate side



Building	Russell (SR)	Dirksen (SD)	Hart (SH)
Numbering system	All rooms are three digits, the first digit indicating floor number and a prefix indicating office building		
Example	Sen. Chuck Schumer's office, SH 322, is located on the third floor of the Hart building		

# Inside the Senate office buildings

## Location and floor plan of the Senate office buildings

Public, handicapped accessible entrance

