

Advocacy 101: Hill Meetings

Every June, in honor of Global Loneliness Awareness Week (GLAW), the Action Network and its members visit Capitol Hill to advocate for our policy priorities. This document provides essential tips for effectively preparing and conducting your meetings with legislators to make sure your voice is heard.

Purpose of Hill Day

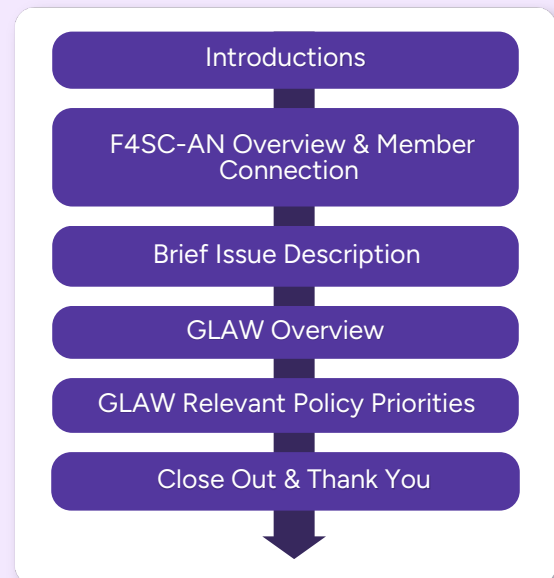
- **Raise visibility** of the issue of social isolation and loneliness
- Encourage member organizations to **engage with diverse stakeholders** and outline key policy objectives critical to the Action Network's continued success
- Advance the Action Network's **policy priorities**

Objectives

- Educate members of Congress on the importance of awareness campaigns, **like Global Loneliness Awareness Week**
- Gain written support for members of Congress to prioritize social isolation, loneliness, and social connection in the **119th Congress**
- Encourage support for Coalition-sponsored pieces of legislation and support for **policy solutions** on a **bipartisan basis**
- **Identify future leaders** in the policymaking realm to partner with for future F4SC-AN initiatives

Potential Meeting Flow

Your meetings with congressional staff on Capitol Hill will typically take on a **conversational flow**, generally structured as outlined below:



Prepare for Meetings by Reviewing Our 2025-2027 Policy Priorities



Prioritize Social Connection as a Health Imperative

Recognize and embed social connection into national health and well-being strategies.



Promote Cross-Sector Collaboration

Align efforts across government, healthcare, and communities to reduce isolation.



Advance Research and Proven Solutions

Invest in data, evaluation, and evidence-based interventions that foster connection.



Ensure Equitable Access to Connection

Remove barriers and expand opportunities for all to build meaningful relationships.



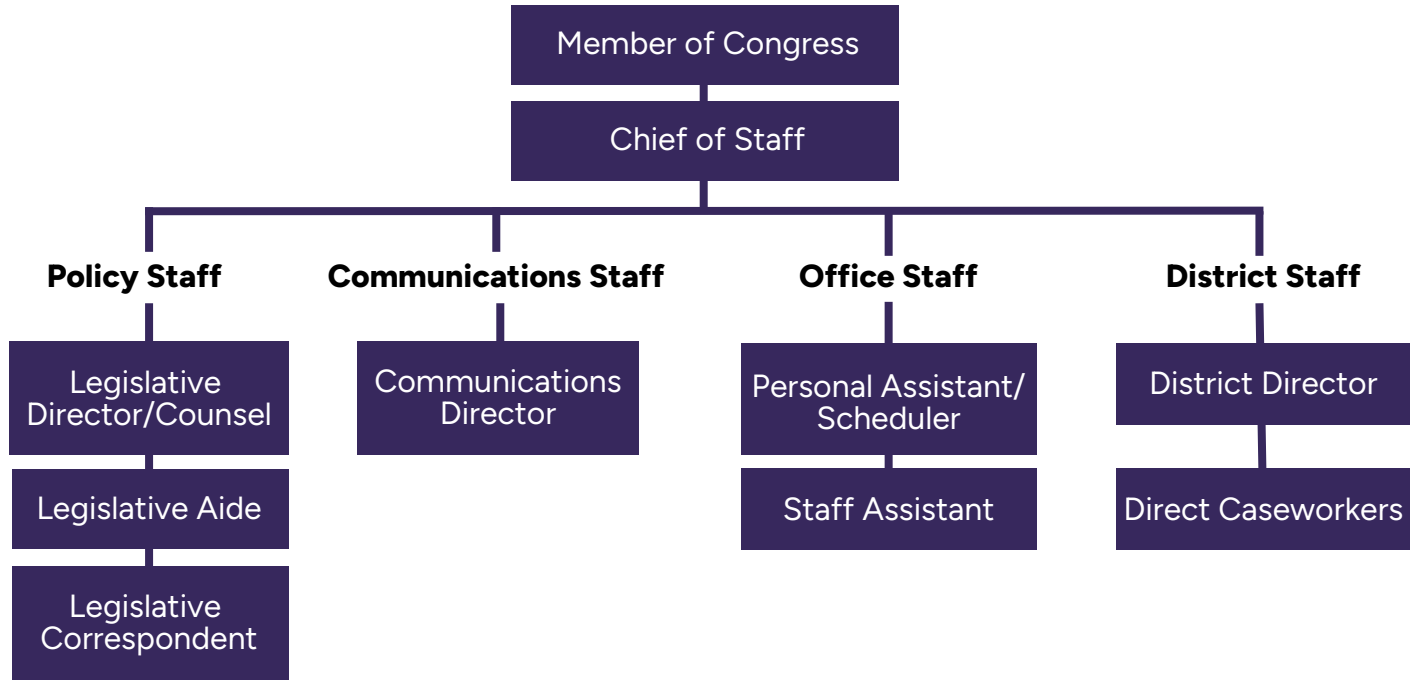
Build a Culture of Belonging

Support inclusive design, public awareness, and everyday practices that strengthen social bonds.



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Understanding Congressional Staffing



It is not uncommon for Members to show up halfway through a meeting or leave early.

Member of Congress

Members tend to be highly over-scheduled. They average 70-hour weeks in D.C. and often double-booking meetings.

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

Chief of Staff

Visitors may not realize how often Chiefs of Staff are in communication with a Member. The tight bond means that Chiefs are often delegated to speak to constituents on behalf of the Member.

Legislative Director (LD)

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

Legislative Assistant (LA)

Legislative assistants tend to be young; their average age is under 29 years old.

These individuals may join in meetings as a junior staffer or note-taker.

Legislative Correspondent (LC) or Staff Assistant (SA)

Legislative Correspondents and Staff Assistants tend to be even younger than Legislative Assistants. Oftentimes, they are recent college graduates.

Members of Congress Listen to 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

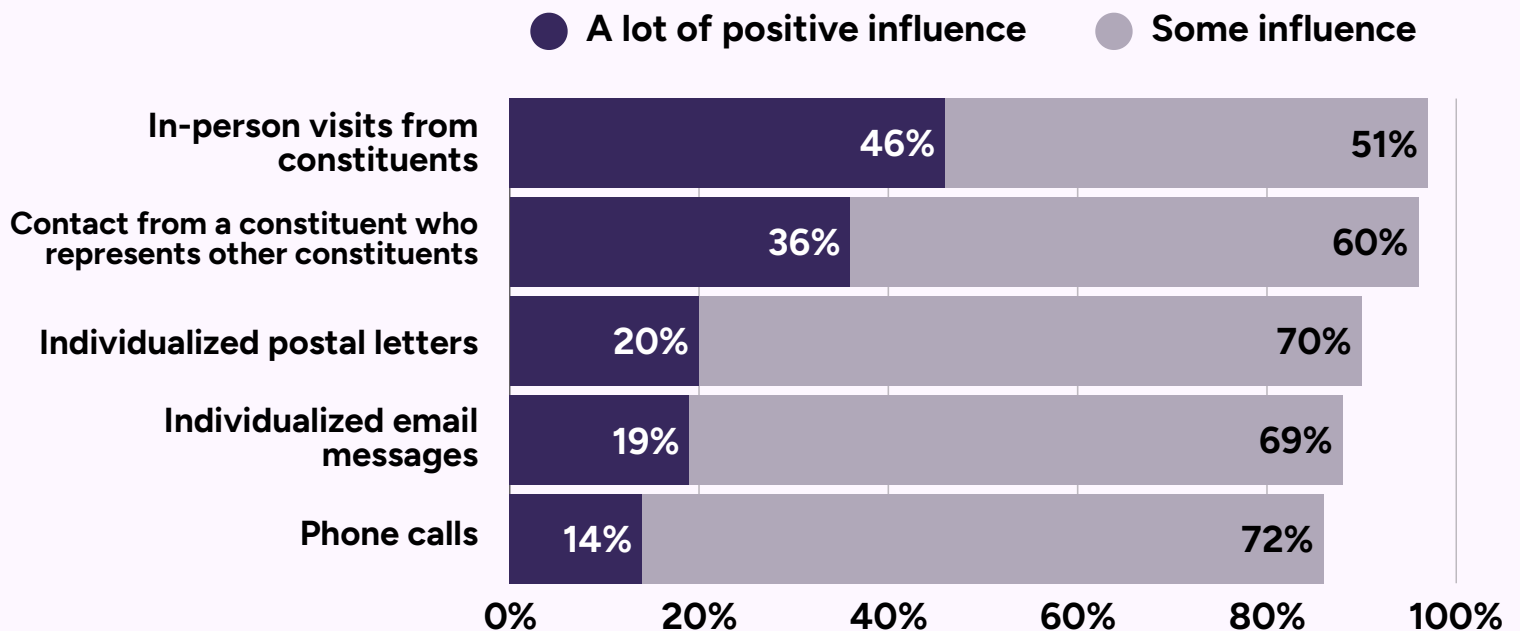


... and find personal communications persuasive

- Personal communication has 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 Constituent Engagement Strategies on Congressional Decision-Making



Data courtesy of the Congressional Management Foundation



Sample Talking Points

✓ **Key Policy Priorities During Global Loneliness Awareness Week**

To align with our 2026 theme of “From Evidence to Action: Policy Solutions to Advance Social Connection”, we are highlighting the following recommendations on key legislation:

- OAA Reauthorization
- Community Wellness and Resilience Act
- Care Across Generations Act
- SILO Act

✓ **F4SC-AN Overview:**

The Foundation for Social Connection Action Network (F4SC-AN) is a collaborative of diverse organizations partnering to end social isolation and loneliness. Our partners are helping to design and advocate for evidence-informed public policies to address social isolation and loneliness.

Our efforts span a wide range of activities – developing and advocating for federal and state policy solutions, leading public awareness activations in Washington D.C. and across the nation, and incorporating the latest research into our policy platform.

✓ **Legislation Overview:**

- The OAA Reauthorization legislation would continue important programs that connect older adults to critical services.
- The Community Wellness and Resilience Act would engage communities to build social connections and enhance the built environment to promote mental wellness and resilience.
- The Care Across Generations Act would expand long-term care facilities to promote multigenerational activities and child care.
- The SILO Act authorizes grants and training to combat loneliness for older adults and people with disabilities through structured social connection programs.

✓ **Brief Issue Description & Key Statistics:**

- Over 1 in 2 Americans - or 58% - report experiencing loneliness.
- Loneliness and social isolation increase the risk for premature death by 26% and 29%, respectively, while social connection reduces our risk of early death by 50%.
- Isolation and loneliness can be associated with reduced community trust in government institutions, mistrust among neighbors, and low levels of perceived social support.
- Communities with strong social networks and higher levels of social capital are more equipped to handle natural disasters and coordinate emergency response plans.
- People who volunteer in their communities are 27% more likely to be employed within one year of losing their job.