



Coalition to End
Social Isolation
& Loneliness

2024 Global Loneliness Awareness Week **Advocacy 101**

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 Coalition's continued success
- Advance the Coalition's **policy priorities**

Objectives

- Educate members of Congress on the importance of awareness campaigns, **like Global Loneliness Awareness Week (GLAW)**
- Gain written support for members of Congress to prioritize social isolation, loneliness, and social connection in the **118th 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 Coalition initiatives

Potential Meeting Flow

Introductions

Coalition
Overview &
Member
Connection

Brief Issue
Description

GLAW
Overview

GLAW
Relevant
Policy
Priorities

Close Out &
Thank You

Conversational Discussion

Best Practices

- Be 15 minutes early to each meeting
- Be flexible and remain on topic
- Refrain from discussing personal political views
- Use personal examples and anecdotes rooted in your experience
- Send a thank you and provide follow-up information
- Stay in touch to maintain relationships

Sample Talking Points

- ✓ **CESIL Overview:** The Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness (CESIL) is the premier national alliance that brings together some of the most influential consumer groups, patient advocates, health plans, community-based organizations, behavioral health groups, and private sector innovators committed to advocating for policy change to combat the adverse effects of social isolation and loneliness.
- ✓ **Global Loneliness Awareness Week Overview:** June 10-16th is Global Loneliness Awareness Week (GLAW), an annual campaign dedicated to raising awareness of loneliness and encouraging people to start a conversation around social connection and belonging. This Global Loneliness Awareness Week, the Coalition is focusing on the role of social connection as a catalyst for public health, civic engagement, and the development of resilient communities.
- ✓ **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.
- ✓ **Key Priorities this Global Loneliness Awareness Week:** To align with our 2024 theme, we have highlighted recommendations from our 2024 Policy Priorities:
 1. Support federal efforts to improve coordination and braid funding opportunities to support the development of safe, healthy, culturally relevant, and accessible community spaces to increase connections to arts, recreation, and natural environments.
 - a. Recognizing that social isolation and lack of accessible community spaces impact wellbeing, we advocate for investing in spaces that foster social connections, a sense of belonging, and community resilience.
 2. Support federal legislation that would establish grants and opportunities for braided funding for state and local governments to implement social interventions and foster social connection in the health, education, employment, housing, transportation, environment, and arts sectors.

Sample Talking Points

- a. Too often, only the negative health effects of social isolation and loneliness are highlighted. Instead, states should have the flexibility to deploy certain evidence-informed multi-sector interventions.
- 3. Expand the scope of screenings for health-related social needs or social drivers to include social isolation, loneliness, and social connection.
 - a. It is difficult to help those experiencing social isolation and loneliness if it is not properly identified. We encourage all federal health programs, including Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP, to incorporate measures of social isolation, loneliness, and social connection in their screenings.
- 4. Enhance funding for public spaces like libraries, community art spaces, and green spaces where community members across generations and abilities can engage in social connectivity and access social and emotional learning.
 - a. Many communities lack inclusive, well-maintained public spaces for meaningful interaction. Investing in these areas is crucial to addressing social isolation and fostering a sense of community.
- 5. Provide guidance and technical assistance to local governments and community-based organizations to improve public awareness of and ease of access to civic engagement opportunities.
 - a. Limited public awareness and access to civic engagement opportunities hinder social connection. Investing in this area ensures more community members are informed and can easily participate in civic activities, fostering greater connection and a sense of belonging.

Prepare for Meetings by Reviewing Our 2024 Policy Priorities



1. Increase public awareness regarding social isolation and loneliness and their effect on health, belonging, well-being, and resilience.



2. Enhance social services and supports to address social isolation, loneliness, and promote social connection.



3. Advance health services and supports to address social isolation, loneliness, and promote social connection.

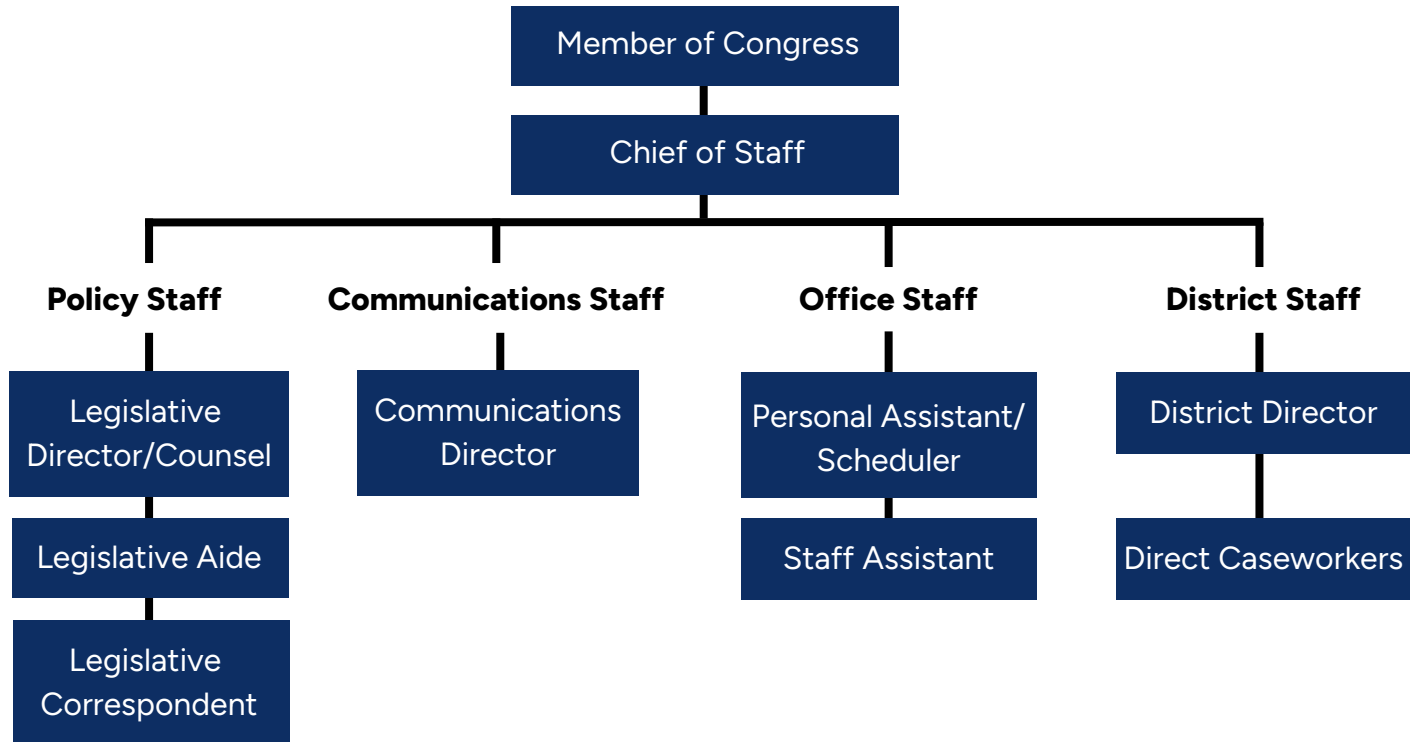


4. Leverage innovative solutions that foster connection and social integration.



5. Advance research to establish the prevalence of social isolation, loneliness, and connection.

Understanding Congressional Staffing



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

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

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

Member of Congress

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

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.

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...

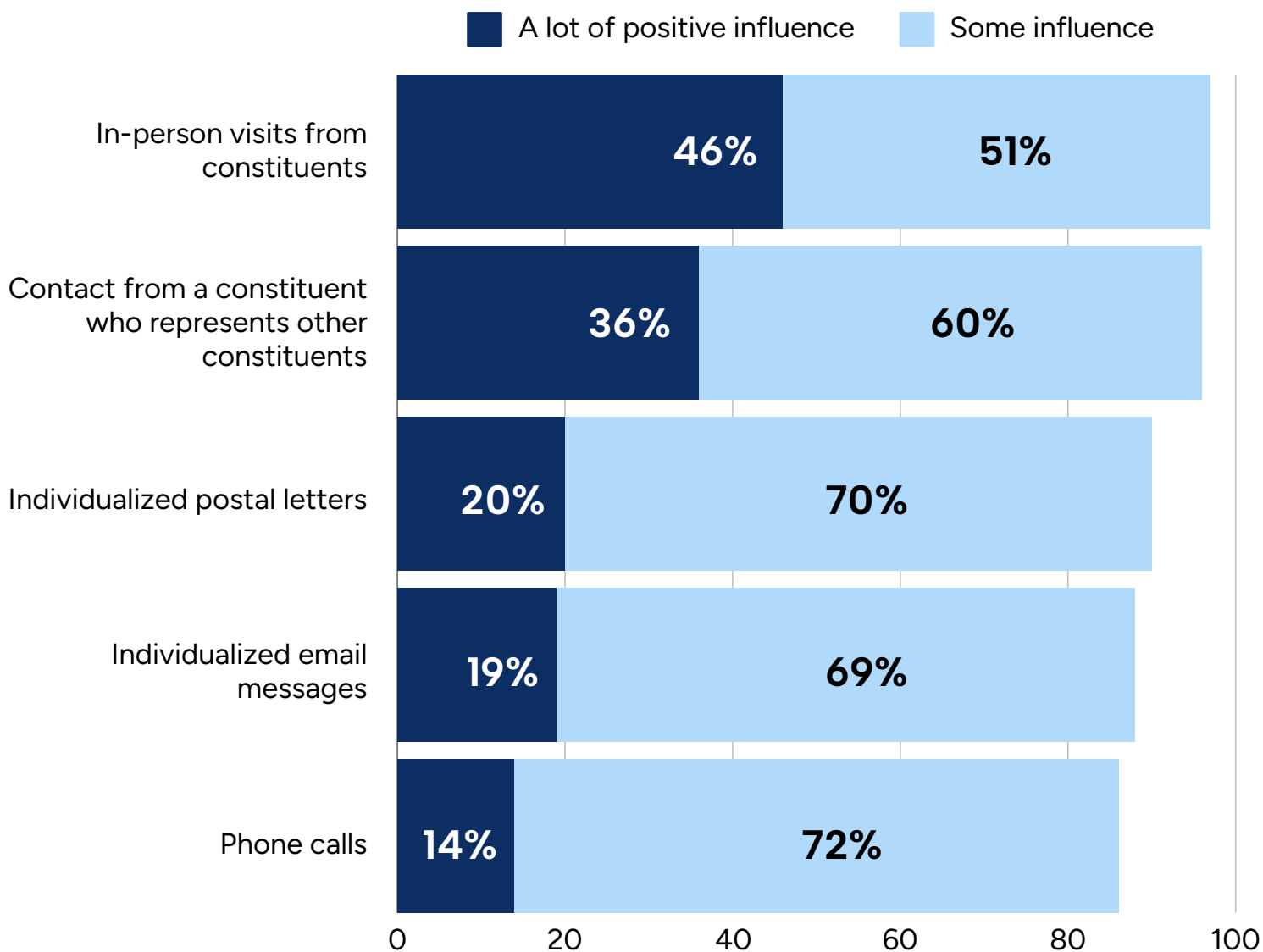
- Constituent conversations guide policymaking
- Reelection hinges on their ability to serve the constituents who vote them into office
- Members trust their staff to help them listen to constituents, so advocates should not be surprised if they meet with staff in lieu of a member



... 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**.



courtesy of the Congressional Management Foundation