How Congress Works

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Washington: What’s Going On?!

- Extremely partisan
- No Clear Ruling Majority
- Ideological Divide
- Focus on Debt & Deficit

Actually, this happened before the earthquake.
What is advocacy?

• Influencing public policy
• Not just new laws but also:
  – Seeking adequate funding
  – Making sure laws are implemented
  – Making sure laws are enforced
  – Making sure laws are interpreted correctly
How to advocate

Need to understand:

• Legislative and regulatory processes
  – How are policies made?
  – Timeline for decisions
• Who the key policymakers are
• Political Climate
• Current and Key Issues
3 Branches of Government

Executive Branch
President & Administration

Legislative Branch
Congress
House & Senate

Judicial Branch
Courts
President & Administration

• Comes up with ideas for new laws
• Writes the rules that make the laws work (regulations)
• Enforces Laws
• Signs or vetoes bills
• Has access to the media
Executive Cabinet

Secretary of Health & Human Services
Kathleen Sebelius

Secretary of Education
Arne Duncan
House of Representatives

- 435 Members
- Two-year terms
- More rules
- More focused on regional issues
Senate

- 100 Members
- Six-year terms
- Fewer rules, more individual power
- Focused on national issues
- Filibuster – use of parliamentary procedures to delay or kill bills
How a bill becomes law

• Introduced by Member of Congress
• Sent to Committee/Subcommittee
• Hearings and markups held
• House or Senate debates
• Conference Committee meets
• House and Senate approve compromise
• President signs into law
Federal Budget Process

- Enactment of bills authorizing/mandating appropriations
- Submission of President’s Budget
- Passage of Budget Resolution (BR)
- Sometimes the BR contains instructions called Budget Reconciliation
- Enactment of 13 appropriations bills
- President signs or vetoes
Federal Budget

• Authorization – establishes or continues (reauthorization) an agency or program
• Appropriations – funds the authorized programs
• Discretionary spending (1/3 budget)
• Entitlement/mandatory spending – for programs guaranteed to eligible individuals a specified level of benefits, e.g. SSI and Medicaid (2/3 budget)
Budget Timeline

How it is supposed to happen...

• President submits budget – usually early February
• Congress enacts concurrent Budget Resolution – by April 15
• Budget reconciliation
• 302(b) allocations
• H&S agree on 13 annual appropriations bills – Sept.
• Fiscal year begins Oct. 1
Key Senate Committees

• Appropriations
  – Barbara Mikulski, MD
  – Richard Shelby, AL
  – L-HHS-Subcommittee
    • Harkin, IA
    • Moran, KS
• Budget
  – Patty Murray, WA
  – Jeff Sessions, AL
• Foreign Relations
  – Robert Menendez, NJ
  – Bob Corker, TN
• Finance
  – Max Baucus, MT
  – Orrin Hatch, UT
• Health, Education, Labor & Pension
  – Tom Harkin, IA
  – Lamar Alexander, TN
• Judiciary
  – Patrick Leahy, VT
  – Charles Grassley, IA
Key House Committees

• Appropriations
  – Harold Rogers, KY
  – Nita Lowey, NY
  – L-HHS-Subcommittee
    • Kingston, GA
    • DeLauro, NY

• Budget
  – Paul Ryan, WI
  – Chris Van Hollen, MD

• Ways and Means
  – Dave Camp, MI

• Judiciary
  – Robert Goodlatte, VA
  – John Conyers, Jr., MI

• Education & Workforce
  – John Kline, MN
  – George Miller, CA

• Energy & Commerce
  – Fred Upton, MI
  – Henry Waxman, CA

• Financial Services
  – Jeb Hensarling, TX
  – Maxine Waters, CA
What can you do?

1. Write letters
2. Make phone calls and personal visits
3. Write letters to the editor
4. Organize and participate in coalitions
5. Hold candidate forums to educate voters
6. Invite congressional delegation to your center
7. Come to the Disability Policy Seminar
Sen. Mikulski speaks at 2011 DPS
With Senator Harkin at Hill Reception 2012
Hill Day!

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>April 17</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast on the Hill</td>
<td>8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capitol Hill Visits</td>
<td>All Day</td>
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Have fun!
Resources

• Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD): http://www.c-c-d.org
• AUCD: http://www.aucd.org
• NACDD: www.nacdd.org
• AAIDD: www.aaidd.org
• UCP: www.ucp.org
• The Arc: www.thearc.org
• SABE: www.sabeusa.org
Thank you!

Questions?

UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot,
nothing is going to get better.
It’s not.

—The Lorax