

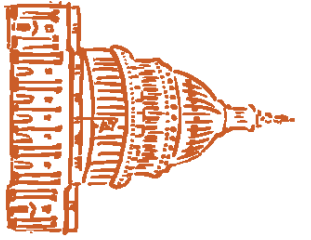


AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

*A PSYCHOLOGIST'S GUIDE
TO FEDERAL ADVOCACY*



PSYCO



ADVOCATE

®

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PSYC ADVOCATE™

A Psychologist's Guide to Federal Advocacy

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INTRODUCTION

The American Psychological Association's (APA) Education Government Relations Office and Public Interest Government Relations Office are pleased to provide you with ***PsycAdvocate: A Psychologist's Guide to Federal Advocacy***. This guide is designed to provide you with the information and strategies you need to become an effective advocate for psychology and the people you serve.

The public policy challenges that our society faces are extremely complex. Understanding and resolving these challenges require the best available information to analyze issues, clarify concerns, and identify policy solutions. Psychology can play a key role in public policy by providing essential knowledge that establishes priorities, improves informed decision-making, and resolves policy differences.

Congress and the Executive Branch agencies make critical policy decisions every day on education, health, mental health, scientific research, social welfare, and social justice issues that not only impact the discipline of psychology, but the communities you serve. We need your help to ensure these policies are informed by psychological science and the expertise that you bring as educators, practitioners, scientists, and leaders in the field. Grassroots support from our members, students, and other interested citizens is a vital component of APA's advocacy agenda. The ***PsycAdvocate Guide*** will provide you with a brief summary of the federal legislative process and an overview of effective ways to become involved and communicate with policymakers.

WHY BECOME INVOLVED IN PUBLIC POLICY?

As psychologists and students, your training and expertise make you uniquely qualified to contribute to the development of federal policies and programs.

- Psychological knowledge can contribute to analyzing, understanding, and resolving key problems facing our nation.
- Federal and state policies affect our welfare as individuals, educators, researchers, practitioners, and students.
- If you don't speak for our field and for whom it benefits, who will?

We hope this guide will give you the information you need to become an engaged member of our Association. APA's Government Relations Offices (GROs) provide members and student affiliates with a variety of public policy and advocacy opportunities, including: Federal Advocacy Trainings and Capitol Hill Visits; Congressional and Executive Branch Science Fellowship Programs; the Public Interest Graduate Student Policy Internship Program; and the APA Federal Action Network.

In addition to the content provided in this guide, please do not hesitate to contact any of our GRO staff for more information, or visit our Federal Action Network to become more involved in specific policy issues. GRO staff are always available to discuss issues of concern to you in supporting your engagement in advocacy.

EDUCATION GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Overview

MISSION

The mission of APA's Education Government Relations Office (ED-GRO) is to increase federal investments in psychology education and training and to enhance the application of psychological knowledge to federal education policy. ED-GRO staff pursue this mission by articulating psychology's unique role in promoting health and preventing disease, improving teaching and learning in America's schools, and increasing education and training opportunities for psychologists to address the unmet mental and behavioral health needs of our nation's underserved populations (e.g., children, older adults, individuals with chronic illness, and victims of abuse and trauma, including veterans and their families, in both urban and rural communities).



EDUCATION ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

We rely on a variety of political and advocacy strategies to pursue our mission while being mindful of what other federal legislation might be under consideration, the current political climate, the current budget situation, and additional Congressional priorities. Amidst competing considerations, our priorities remain:

1. To expand the Graduate Psychology Education (GPE) Program and to seek support for psychology training in federal programs for health professionals and psychological scientists; to increase the role of health service psychologists in primary care and to address the mental and behavioral health needs of our nation's underserved populations.
2. To increase the role and application of psychology to education (teaching and learning) in *The Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, *The Higher Education Act*, and other federal legislation that create national programs to meet the needs of our nation's underserved children and youth.
3. To promote federal support for college mental health services and suicide prevention programs established by *The Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act*.

EDUCATION ADVOCACY OBJECTIVES

We achieve our mission by focusing on the following objectives:

1. Target relevant federal legislation for changes that are consistent with the Education Directorate's advocacy mission.
2. Monitor the implementation of federal legislation that has an impact on the Education Directorate's advocacy mission.
3. Increase psychologists' awareness of the need for education advocacy and increase their involvement in the advocacy process.

PUBLIC INTEREST GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Overview

MISSION

As part of the Public Interest Directorate, APA's Public Interest Government Relations Office (PI-GRO) uses public policy to promote the application of psychological knowledge to the fundamental problems of human welfare and social justice. In advocating for federal policies that bring psychological knowledge to bear on issues such as discrimination, human rights, and health disparities, PI-GRO promotes policies that advance the equitable and just treatment of all segments of society.

PI-GRO regularly works with APA membership to help ensure the success of its advocacy efforts and to enhance the ability of the field to advocate on key issues. PI-GRO relies on the expertise of member-experts to assist with the development and dissemination of educational and advocacy materials that are shared with Congress and the Executive Branch.

OBJECTIVES

PI-GRO staff pursue this mission by communicating psychology's unique role in promoting health and preventing disease, understanding and improving social relations, and reducing prejudice and stereotypes. PI-GRO advocates for policies that improve social conditions, such as reducing health disparities, poverty, and trauma, as well as addressing the unmet mental and behavioral health needs of our nation's underserved populations. In addition, PI-GRO advocates for advancing human rights and reducing discrimination against stigmatized populations. Given the number of important legislative factions in the nation, PI-GRO selects its advocacy portfolio based on consistency with APA's mission, policies, and strategic plan; psychology's ability to contribute unique and important expertise; prospects for success; and availability of resources.

We achieve our mission by pursuing the following strategies:

1. In consultation with member-experts, identify social issues where psychology has relevant and unique knowledge.
2. Determine whether to support existing or create new federal legislation that is consistent with the Public Interest Directorate's advocacy agenda.
3. Monitor the implementation of existing federal legislation that has an impact on the Public Interest advocacy agenda and provide input to federal executive agencies.
4. Increase awareness among psychologists and students of the need for advocacy and increase their involvement in the advocacy process.

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

PI-GRO provides APA members and student affiliates with a variety of public policy training and advocacy opportunities on a broad range of issues. Please contact our office to find out what training opportunities are currently available.



Center: Rep. John Lewis (D-GA) meets with (from left) PI GRO staff, APA member David Brodzinsky, PhD, and Meghann Galloway, MA, APA policy intern.

PRIORITY POPULATIONS AND ISSUES

PI-GRO focuses its efforts to provide the best psychological information to policymakers in the following key areas:

- **Aging**—improving mental health care: increasing community-based services, reducing poverty and violence, suicide prevention, caregiver support, and improving psychological services in long-term care.
- **Children, Youth, and Families**—enhancing child development and supporting families: preventing child abuse, improving access to child care and pre-school programs, improving access to mental and behavioral health care, and increasing equity in juvenile justice.
- **Ethnic Minority Affairs**—improving health and reducing health care disparities: increasing cultural competence, reducing prejudice and discrimination, supporting the federal Minority Fellowship Program, improving American Indian/Alaska Native health services, and promoting psychological perspectives on immigration.
- **Health Disparities and Health Care Reform**—reducing health disparities across all populations: implementing health care reform policies, increasing access to mental and behavioral health services, reducing the stigma of mental illness, and addressing the social determinants of health.
- **HIV & AIDS**—improving integrated care and reducing discrimination: addressing substance use, improving mental and behavioral health, supporting the effective application of psychology to the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, and reducing stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS.
- **Individuals with Disabilities**—improving social conditions and mental health services: improving access to health care, increasing employment protections and training, reducing stigma, advocating for international human rights issues, supporting parents with disabilities, and improving services within elementary and secondary education.
- **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues**—reducing stigma, discrimination and prejudice and improving health care: preventing hate crimes, reducing health disparities, increasing data collection and research, preventing violence and bullying, and establishing workplace and civil rights.
- **Poverty and Socioeconomic Status**—preventing and ameliorating poverty and its negative effects: increasing access to health care, education, and affordable housing, supporting policies that ensure adequate wages and family leave, improving safety-net programs and employment laws.
- **Trauma, Violence and Abuse**—preventing and ameliorating all forms of violence and trauma: disseminating evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies, improving research on violence, and increasing domestic and international legal protections against violence.
- **Women's Issues**—improving women's health and reducing discrimination: preventing and treating postpartum depression, increasing access to reproductive care, prevention of violence and abuse, and ensuring equality in employment and education.



SCIENCE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Overview

MISSION

The Science Government Relations Office (Science-GRO) focuses on the enhancement of federal support for psychology and the promotion of psychological research, teaching, and scientific applications.

SCIENCE ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

In support of that goal, APA sponsors an advocacy program on behalf of the science of psychology. Because programs passed by Congress affect every APA member in every state, it's crucial to advocate for psychological science at the federal level. For each APA member, that impact takes shape in a unique way. Congress decides, for example, if, as a nation, we will fund scientific research. Congress decides something about the nature of that research and about the level at which it will be funded. Congress decides whether research will involve the use of non-human animals, or whether certain types of questions can be asked of human participants in research. APA's Science GRO staff works to ensure that Congress makes informed choices when making such critical decisions.

APA is called upon by Congress to offer advice in sensitive policy areas that profoundly affect the ways in which psychologists do their work. For example, the APA advises Congressional decision-makers on complex legislative and regulatory issues such as the use of nonhuman animals in research, testing and assessment, behavioral science issues in the national security arena, and research on human sexual behavior. Through its Science-GRO, APA maintains a close liaison with the constantly changing decision-makers on Capitol Hill, working with them as they formulate legislation affecting psychological research and training. This advocacy program also maintains an important liaison between APA and other scientific societies, organizations, and coalitions to advance common legislative interests.

Of perhaps foremost importance to our members, Science-GRO works to increase support for federally funded psychological research. The federal government has a tradition of generosity in support of science, but the behavioral and social sciences have had to struggle for an appropriate share of federal research resources. The competition for federal support is vigorous, and the APA science advocacy program makes the case for psychology to Congress through its "*Stand for Science*" campaign.

SCIENCE ADVOCACY OBJECTIVES

1. Advocate on behalf of the science of psychology for increased federal support of psychological research, develop opportunities to present testimony before House and Senate Appropriations Committees, and hold Capitol Hill briefings to educate Members of Congress and their staff about the relevance of psychological science to pressing national challenges.
2. Increase the number of psychologists involved in federal science policymaking by taking APA members to Capitol Hill to testify before Congress and to meet with legislators, nominating preeminent psychologists for appointment to national science advisory bodies, and sponsoring the APA Executive Branch Science Fellowship Program.
3. Work in important coalitions to develop and put forward broad public policy agendas.
4. Bring top leaders of federal agencies and Congress together with APA science leaders to strengthen our partnerships and tackle critical issues of concern to research and psychologists.

THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS

The Senate and House of Representatives: A Selected Review

Established by Article I, Section 1, of the United States Constitution, the Legislative Branch consists of the Senate and House of Representatives, which together constitute the United States Congress.

Each term of the full Congress lasts for two years, beginning in January of the odd-numbered year following the national November elections. Each Congress is further divided into two one-year sessions.

The **Senate**, sometimes referred to as the “upper chamber,” consists of 100 Members – two from each state. While each Senator’s term of office is six years, the terms are staggered so that one-third of the Senate is up for reelection every two years. To be elected, a Senator must be at least 30 years of age, have been a citizen of the United States for at least nine years, and be a resident of the state s/he represents. Of the two Senators from a state serving at the same time, the one who was elected first is typically referred to as the “senior” Senator from that state. The other is referred to as the “junior” Senator.

Elected by the majority party, the **Senate Majority Leader** leads the Senate. The leader for the opposing party is known as the **Senate Minority Leader**.

The **House of Representatives**, or “lower chamber,” comprises 435 Representatives that serve two-year terms. Members of the House are often referred to as “Congressman” or “Congresswoman.” Each state is guaranteed at least one seat in the House, and the remaining seats are apportioned among the states according to population, as determined every ten years by the National Census. As of 2010, the average population of a Congressional district is 710,000. To be elected, a Representative must be at least 25 years of age, have been a citizen of the United States for at least seven years, be a resident of the state, and (most often) of the district s/he represents.



Photo Credit: Architect of the Capitol (AOC) , 2011

The leader of the House, referred to as the **Speaker of the House**, is selected by the majority party. The Speaker of the House is assisted by the **House Majority Leader**, who helps execute party strategies. The leader and spokesperson of the minority party is known as the **House Minority Leader**.

AT-A-GLANCE: THE U.S. SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SENATE	HOUSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serves six-year terms 100 Members State-wide election More equal distribution of power Extended debate Amendments generally allowed 60 votes needed to bring bill to vote (overcome filibuster) Simple majority vote needed to pass bill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serves two-year terms 435 Members Elected in districts More powerful committee leaders and leadership Rules limit debate Amendments might not be allowed Majority leadership determines whether a bill is brought to the floor Simple majority vote needed to pass bill

THE FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

How a Bill Becomes a Law

Congress has a prescribed process by which many bills are introduced and enacted. Though the process may seem complicated, this was actually what our Founding Fathers intended—that the establishment of laws affecting all Americans would not be made without a great deal of deliberation and debate. Having a basic understanding of the legislative process is the first step in identifying opportunities to advance your advocacy goals and utilize different strategies as legislation moves through this process.



BILL INTRODUCTION AND REFERRAL

Members of Congress draft legislative proposals, or **bills**, to seek a legislative solution to a particular problem that has been brought to their attention. Although only a Member of Congress can introduce a bill, the ideas that inspire legislative proposals can come from a number of sources. Members receive input from constituents, scholars, interest groups, state legislatures, federal agencies, and even the President of the United States.

After a bill is drafted, any Member of Congress can introduce, or **sponsor**, a bill. Depending on which chamber the bill originates in, the bill is designated with an “S.” if it is introduced in the Senate, or “H.R.” if it is introduced in the House. Bills from both chambers are then assigned numbers according to the order in which they are introduced that Congress. For example, “S. 3” for the third bill introduced in the Senate, or “H.R. 82” for the 82nd bill introduced in the House of Representatives.

COMMITTEE REVIEW AND ACTION

The bill is then referred to the appropriate Congressional **committee**. Congress relies heavily on the committee system, which allows for specialized consideration of a bill by issue. Almost all Congressional committees are organized further into **subcommittees**, which concentrate on a subset of areas within the jurisdiction of the full committee. For example, the Senate Committee on Health, Edu-



cation, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) includes subcommittees on Children and Families, as well as Primary Health and Aging.

Party leadership determines which Members serve on each committee and subcommittee. Each committee and subcommittee is run by a **Chairman**, who represents the majority party. The minority party is represented by the **Ranking Member**, who is often the most senior Member of the minority party serving on the committee. The majority party holds the plurality of the seats on a given committee. There are approximately 250 Congressional committees and subcommittees, and by concentrating on specific areas of national interest, the Members and their staff often become experts on the legislative issues within their jurisdiction.

Usually open to the public, Chairmen often conduct **hearings** on topics within the jurisdiction of their committee or subcommittee. In allowing Members of Congress to collect specific information, hearings can be related to a specific piece of legislation, like “*H.R. 5: The Student Success Act*,” or on a broader topic, like “*Education Research: Identifying Effective Programs to Support Students and Teachers*.” Committees invite government officials, academic experts, interest groups, and other organizations to provide oral testimony before the committee, or submit written testimony for the legislative record.

After a bill has been introduced and assigned to a committee, there is no assurance that the committee will take action on the bill. Most bills “die in committee,” as no further action is taken on many proposals. If the committee chooses to consider a bill, the Chairman will schedule a **markup**, where the committee or subcommittee Members will formally review and vote on **amendments**, or changes, to the specific piece of legislation. Once a markup is completed, the bill must be voted on by the subcommittee, then the entire committee, before it can move on for consideration by the full House of Representatives or Senate.

THE FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

How a Bill Becomes a Law



FLOOR DEBATE AND PASSAGE

Once a bill is approved by a full committee, this does not automatically trigger consideration by the full chamber. The process for a bill to be considered by the full chamber will differ depending on whether it's moving to the Senate floor or the House floor.

Whether a bill is given floor time depends on the Senate or House leadership and the amount of time left in the Congressional session. Advocates may need to engage at this time to put pressure on the majority party leaders to bring legislation to the floor for a vote. Once a bill reaches the chamber floor, it can be debated by all Members.

Senate Procedure

Once a bill is reported from committee to the full chamber in the Senate, the Senate Majority Leader and Senate Minority Leader consult with their parties to decide which bills will be considered by the full chamber. Ultimately, however, the Majority Leader makes the final determination.

Unlike the House, debate in the Senate is not subject to time limits. This allows for Senators to **filibuster**—a procedural practice where a Senator refuses to relinquish his or her time on the floor to delay proceedings and/or purposefully prevent a vote on a bill. The only way to end a filibuster and limit debate in the Senate is through a **cloture** motion, the method by which a supermajority of the Senate agrees to limit further debate and consideration of a bill. Non-controversial bills are often brought to the floor for full debate through a streamlined process called **unanimous consent**.

House Procedure

After a bill is passed by a full committee in the House, the Speaker of the House determines the legislative calendar. If a bill is selected to advance, the bill is then forwarded to the House Rules Committee which sets a rule governing the time limits on debate and the amendment process. Options include unlimited

amendments, limited amendments voted on by the Rules Committee, and no amendments. After a bill's rule is set by the Rules Committee, the bill then moves to the full House chamber for consideration.

In the House, some non-controversial bills are considered under the **suspension of rules procedure**, which streamlines consideration of a measure by prohibiting floor amendments, limiting debate to 40 minutes, and requiring a two-thirds majority for passage. More complex legislation usually includes amendments that are debated and voted on. The last step in the passage of some bills is the **motion to recommit**, where the minority party can introduce a measure for vote to send the legislation back to committee. House approval of a bill requires a simple majority vote.

After Passage by One Chamber

Once a bill is approved by one chamber of legislature, it is then sent to the other chamber for consideration. Often, a bill repeats the same legislative process in the other chamber—the bill is introduced and referred to the appropriate committee and/or subcommittee, hearings and/or markups may be held, and then it is reported out to the full chamber for a vote. As a result, the bill that is produced by the second chamber of the legislature is usually similar, but rarely identical to the bill that was approved by the first chamber.

If a bill passes both chambers, but in different forms, the differences between the bills must be resolved through a **conference committee**. Members of the conference committee reconcile the different versions of the bill through negotiation. When a compromise is reached, the conference committee issues a conference report, which includes the final bill, that is then sent back to both the Senate and House for a final vote.

In some cases, legislation approved by one chamber goes directly to the floor of the other. In these cases, consultation between both chambers occurs before the formal vote.

THE FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

How a Bill Becomes a Law



PRESIDENTIAL APPROVAL

When a bill has passed both the Senate and the House in identical form, it is sent to the President who may sign the bill into law or **veto** it. If the President vetoes the bill, it returns to the legislature unsigned. Congress may vote to **override** the veto by two-thirds vote in each chamber. If the two-thirds majority is reached, the legislature overrides the presidential veto and the bill becomes law.



Authorizing Legislation

Establishes Programs or Agencies

- ☆ *Affordable Care Act*
- ☆ *Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act*
- ☆ *Ryan White Care Act*

Defines Rights and/or Responsibilities

- ☆ *Civil Rights Act*
- ☆ *Defense of Marriage Act*
- ☆ *Age Discrimination and Employment Act*

Appropriating Legislation

Provides Funding Levels for Authorized Programs, Agencies, and Supplemental Needs

- ☆ *Disaster Relief Appropriations Act*
- ☆ *Biennial Budgeting and Appropriations Act*
- ☆ *Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act*

Legislation can authorize programs, establish agencies, and appropriate funds.

TYPES OF LEGISLATION

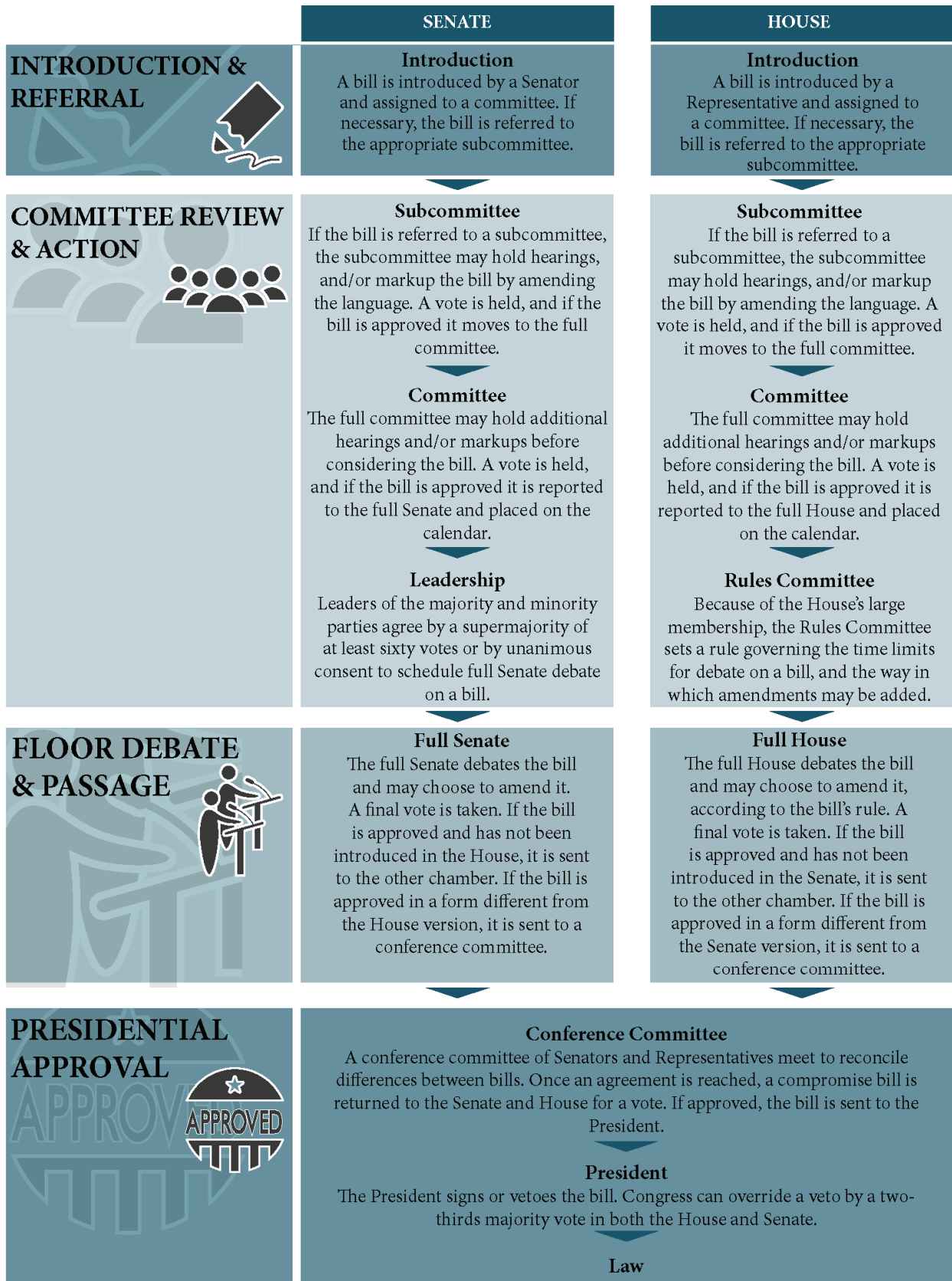
Authorizing legislation can establish, renew (reauthorize), or repeal programs and/or agencies, or define rights and/or responsibilities. These bills set limits on the amount of funds that can be spent annually on programs, such as extended unemployment benefits and college student loans.

Appropriating legislation provides the exact amount from the current budget that is to be allocated for specific programs or agencies. If funds are not appropriated, the program cannot be initiated. Unlike authorizing legislation, appropriating legislation must be enacted into law every year through the annual appropriations process. This process will be described in further detail later in this guide.

Safety-net programs guarantee certain levels of benefits to individuals who meet eligibility requirements set by law. These programs are “off-budget” and are, therefore, not a part of the annual appropriations process. Such programs include Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

THE FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

How a Bill Becomes a Law



CONGRESS' POWER OF THE PURSE

Budget, Authorization, and Appropriations

One of the most important responsibilities of the U.S. Congress is the **power of the purse**—the power to raise taxes and appropriate funds from the Treasury. The primary avenue through which Congress exercises this power is through the federal budget process, authorization, and appropriation of federal spending.

THE FEDERAL BUDGET PROCESS

Both the President and Congress develop an annual budget for operating the federal government. The President's budget proposal is required by *The Budget and Accounting Act of 1921* to be submitted to Congress by the first Monday in February, which marks the start of the annual budget process. Congress established its own rules for the annual budget process in *The Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974*.

In Congress, the House and Senate Budget Committees each develop their own proposed budgets and provide budget ceilings, or caps, for the major functions of the federal government. The Appropriations Committees then determine how each program and agency will be funded. The Congressional Budget is not considered law, but establishes a framework for the Appropriations Committees to allocate federal funding for the next fiscal year. Both the Budget and Appropriations Committees hold hearings and receive testimony on how federal funds should be allocated.

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

In the context of determining spending, **authorization bills** create, continue, or modify existing agencies, programs, or activities. These bills may define the duties and/or functions of a program or agency, as well as the responsibilities of agency officials. In addition, this type of legislation authorizes the enactment of appropriations to fund an agency or program.

APPROPRIATIONS MEASURES

Appropriations bills provide detailed funding levels for authorized agencies, programs, and/or activities.

There are three main types of appropriations measures:

1. *Regular appropriations bills*—bills that provide funding for the next fiscal year (beginning October 1st).
2. *Continuing resolutions*—a bill that continues funding federal agencies, programs, and activities for a specific period of time, if a regular appropriations bill is not enacted by the beginning of a fiscal year.
3. *Supplemental appropriations bills*—bills that provide additional funding for unexpected needs while a fiscal year is in progress (e.g. funding for natural disaster victims, unemployment benefits, etc.).

THE ANNUAL APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

Annual appropriations measures fall under the jurisdiction of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, and their 12 respective Subcommittees.

Each House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee has authority over one regular appropriations bill to fund the agencies and programs under its jurisdiction for the next fiscal year. While Congress has traditionally considered and approved each of the 12 regular appropriations bills individually, Congress may also combine two or more of the bills into an **omnibus appropriations bill**. If Congress cannot agree on a budget or appropriations bills, a continuing resolution may be approved to continue current levels of funding until a compromise can be reached.



Janis Crowther, PhD, meeting with Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH)

INFLUENCING THE PROCESS

Opportunities for Advocacy

There are a number of opportunities throughout the federal legislative process for constituents to provide input. Through grassroots activities, like attending meetings on Capitol Hill, making phone calls, attending local town hall forums, or sending letters, constituents can express their views and interests to their elected officials. Constituents should not wait until a bill is up for a vote before weighing in, and it is always worthwhile to be persistent in contacting key legislators to remind them of your concerns and recommendations. We can help you determine when to weigh in to maximize the effectiveness of your efforts.

BILL INTRODUCTION

Identifying problems and possible legislative solutions is a key step in starting the legislative process. At this stage, advocates can weigh in on important issues and propose a specific way for a legislator to solve the problem. The initial drafting stage is one of the best times for constituents to influence policy-makers. Communication from constituents to key legislators directly involved in writing the legislation is especially effective at this time. Although only Members of Congress can introduce legislation, the ideas behind legislation emanate from many sources. Constituents, scholars, interest groups, and other interested organizations all have a role to play in alerting their elected officials of pressing issues in their community and/or state, or within their profession. Even when writing or drafting their own bills, Members of Congress often seek assistance from outside experts in crafting proposed legislation and perfecting the ideas contained within them.

COMMITTEE REVIEW AND ACTION

After a bill is introduced, committee and/or subcommittee deliberation provides another significant opportunity to shape proposed legislation. APA often writes letters to Members of Congress expressing support or apprehension over various pieces of legislation, which includes expressing concerns about certain provisions that might have unintended conse-

quences for the discipline of psychology or certain populations. During the annual appropriations cycle, it's important for constituents to advocate for programs and activities that impact the livelihood of their communities. During hearings, expert witnesses are invited to the Hill and asked to comment on public policy issues or specific bills. Constituents may submit testimony for the record, and grassroots efforts can generate support or opposition for bills and/or amendments during a committee markup.

FLOOR DEBATE AND PASSAGE

Once a bill is being considered on the floor of the House or Senate, there may be yet another opportunity for constituents with expertise in a field to offer their perspective. Constituents can provide information for Members to mention during speeches on the floor in support or opposition to specific bills or amendments. You should always weigh in with your opinion about final passage: "yea!" or "nay!"

WHAT INFLUENCES LAWMAKERS?



EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

Why Advocate?

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

First Amendment, U.S. Constitution

PSYCHOLOGY AND FEDERAL ADVOCACY

Why does advocacy matter for psychologists? Because the federal government impacts psychology in numerous ways, including funding basic, applied, and clinical research; creating and administering social programs critical to the livelihood and health of the people psychologists serve; providing reimbursement for service delivery; and expanding opportunities in psychology education and training.

Federal advocacy represents a critical activity for the field. In the appropriations and budget process, policymakers are asked to increase, protect, or reduce funds that support essential education, public welfare, and research programs. It is crucial for psychologists to advocate on behalf of these vital programs.

TOP 5 REASONS PSYCHOLOGISTS SHOULD ADVOCATE:

1. Psychological knowledge, practice, and science play an important role in understanding key policy issues, informing resolutions to social problems, and improving human welfare.
2. It raises awareness of psychology’s contributions across all domains of human experience.
3. It advances psychology as a health profession.
4. It enhances psychology as a behavioral science.
5. It helps garner federal funding for psychology.

ADVOCATING WITH CONGRESS

Given Congress’ specific role in developing and funding federal laws that support education, health, and social welfare programs, the majority of federal advocacy on behalf of psychology occurs in the Legislative Branch. This takes four forms:

1. Educating lawmakers on the effects of their proposals for psychology, psychologists, and the populations they serve.
2. Advancing issues that are part of APA’s social justice mission.
3. Promoting the science of psychology as a STEM discipline and educating policymakers about psychology’s contributions to public health, education, national security, veterans, and public safety.
4. Expanding federal support for psychology education and training opportunities for a diverse and culturally competent psychology workforce.

In the sections that follow, you will find information to guide you through the advocacy process, including identifying who to contact, writing a ‘thank you’ note, and planning follow-up activities. Whatever you do, remember the electorate entrusts the public good to these officials—they represent you! It is your right to tell them what matters to you. Your psychology training has prepared you well for advocacy in the policy arena—you are articulate, skilled in analysis and integration of complex information, and experienced in establishing strong relationships. Let your voice be heard!



From left: Senator Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) and Jacquie Gray, PhD

EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

Reaching Out to Congress

COMMUNICATING WITH CONGRESS

The federal government impacts psychology in numerous ways. Before taking action to educate policymakers on a specific issue, advocates should consider the following critical questions:

- *Who should we contact?*
- *What should we say?*
- *When is the optimal time for such outreach?*
- *Where should we direct our message?*
- *How should we deliver the message?*

This guide aims to provide psychologists with the knowledge necessary to reach out to Congress. The following sections provide key background information on contacting and establishing relationships with elected officials.

At times, APA calls on its membership through the Federal Action Network for assistance in building legislative support for specific issues on Capitol Hill. During these grassroots mobilization campaigns, APA provides templates for emails and phone calls to Members of Congress. This makes taking action through APA's Federal Action Network very easy.

WHO TO CONTACT

To advocate effectively, you must determine who the right person to contact is. Reaching out to your own Members of Congress—those who represent you at the district and state level—frequently makes the most sense. As your elected official, these people represent you and must maintain sensitivity to your views as their constituent. During each election, legislators must win support of their district or state, which provides you, the voter, important leverage. Many resources exist to help you find your federal legislators, including APA's Federal Action Network and the House of Representatives and Senate websites.

Occasions exist, too, when it makes sense to contact Members of Congress who represent other districts and/or states. For example, communicating with a committee Chair or Ranking Member at a critical point in the legislative process or when your expertise is relevant to specific proposals under development. As noted previously, these opportunities include delivering oral or written testimony and/or providing background information to Members or their staff. Should you wish to develop testimony or provide expertise on a particular issue, GRO staff are always available to assist you and offer advice.

Once you know whom to contact, visit the Member or committee website to locate contact information for their D.C., district, and state offices. Alternately, you can call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 to connect you to Members' Washington offices, which can provide additional contact information.

THE ROLE OF CONGRESSIONAL STAFF

No matter how you choose to communicate with Congress, you must understand the role of staff members. In most Congressional offices, Legislative Assistants (LAs) will handle content areas of interest to you. Representatives and Senators rely heavily on their staff for knowledge and key information on specific issues. In personal offices, staff members commonly handle multiple subject areas. Because their input strongly influences the Members' stance on an issue, developing a relationship with key Congressional staff represents a good investment of time and energy.

In addition to legislators' personal office staff, committees and subcommittees also maintain professional staff. Committee staff often write legislation, making them important contacts to maintain. Committee staff members specialize more narrowly and acquire expertise in a smaller number of key committee issues. They may also work for the legislators who chair or serve as Ranking Member of the committee or subcommittee.

EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

Reaching Out to Congress

Staff in district offices serve different functions. They are responsible for lawmakers' appointments and appearances in the district. Some staff function as caseworkers to help constituents with problems pertaining to federal programs and operations, such as Social Security questions, eligibility for federal disability programs, and immigration issues. Staff in the districts usually do not handle legislative portfolios, but serve as important communicators, relaying constituent concerns to lawmakers, evaluating local problems, and communicating the local impact of federal programs.

WHAT TO SAY

It is critical to be clear and concise when delivering your message and request to policymakers. What is it you want them to do? Constituents often ask Members of Congress to cosponsor legislation, cast a "yea" or "nay" vote in committee or on the House or Senate floor, support a program's continuation or increase in funding, or simply give more attention to a certain issue. Legislators need to know how this issue is affecting his/her state or district, and may request additional information from constituents or other stakeholders. Offering the right data or anecdote sometimes means the difference between a legislator taking the requested action or not.



From left: Joe Evans, PhD and Rep. Lee Terry (R-NE)

WHEN TO SAY IT

The timing of your communications will depend on your message and request. Sometimes, requests for co-sponsorship make the most impact at the time of introduction when the issue is fresh. In addition, legislators also need to hear from constituents in the days leading up to a specific vote about why they should vote one way or the other. The appropriations cycle, including hearings, markups, and votes, also offers numerous opportunities for outreach from constituents on funding levels of key priority. There is no secret to the timing, however, it does require some specific information about current events and the Congressional calendar. Education, PI, and Science-GRO staff can serve as a good resource in determining when the most appropriate time to communicate to Members of Congress is.

WHERE TO ADVOCATE

The best place to advocate is either in the Member's district or D.C. office. On most issues, writing or calling the D.C. office makes the most sense. However, on issues of particular importance to you (e.g., a federal grant at your university or programs in your community, local hospital, or public schools), it sometimes makes sense to approach the district office. This allows you to meet in-person, develop a personal relationship with the office, and explain how federal legislation affects life in your community.

HOW TO REACH OUT

Once you have the contact, message, timing, and location in-hand, advocates need to decide how to deliver their message. Many options exist for communicating with Capitol Hill. U.S. citizens can pick up the phone, write letters and emails, or attend in-person meetings to influence Members of Congress. APA offers its members the opportunity to communicate with federal lawmakers through its Federal Action Network. At different points in time, APA's GROs bring members on Hill visits to advocate for important legislation.

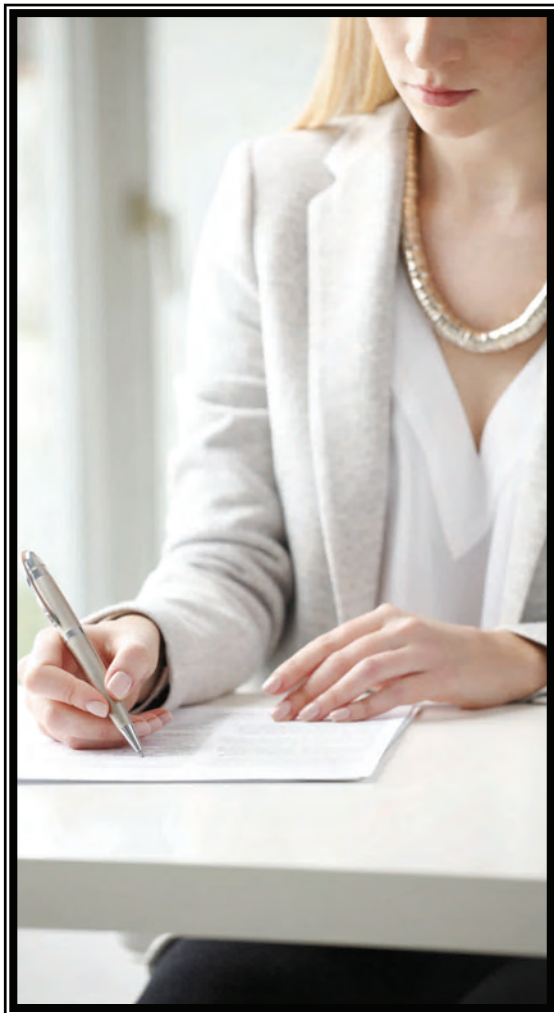
EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

Writing a Letter

Congressional offices in Washington, D.C. receive hundreds of letters and emails from constituents each day.

Personally written letters get much more attention than pre-printed materials or postcards.

However, always keep in mind that due to increased security screening of incoming mail, letters can sometimes take up to three weeks to reach a Congressional office. For this reason, never write a letter to make a request about urgent matters, like a pending vote. The guidelines below will improve the effectiveness of your correspondence with your Members of Congress.



DON'T FORGET TO BE:

Direct. State the subject of your correspondence clearly. Keep it succinct, and address only one issue in each communication.

Informative. Identify yourself as a psychologist or graduate student (and constituent, where applicable). State your own views in a clear, coherent manner, support your views with your expert knowledge, and cite the bill number (e.g. H.R. 1234 or S. 3456) of relevant legislation, if appropriate.

Constructive. Focus your correspondence on the issue at hand and how the policymaker can address your concerns. Avoid taking a pessimistic tone.

Factual/Courteous. Rely on the facts, and avoid emotional arguments, personal attacks, threats of political influence, or demands.

Specific. Always try to explain the hometown relevance of the issue. If permitted, use your institution's stationary.

Selective. To avoid the risk of diluting your message—and your effectiveness—write only on the issues of great importance to you.

Inquiring. Ask for the policymaker's view on the subject and how she or he intends to vote on relevant legislation. Expect a reply, even if only a form letter.

Helpful. Offer additional information if needed, and make sure to provide your contact information.

Appreciative. Remember to say thank you. Follow the issue after you write, and send a note of appreciation if your lawmaker votes your way.

Concise and to the Point: The best letter is well-written and no longer than one page.

EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

Sample Letter

1. Use your personal or business address ----- [DATE]

[ADDRESS]

2. Address your legislator properly ----- The Honorable [REPRESENTATIVE'S FIRST NAME, LAST NAME]
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative [LAST NAME]:

3. State your relationship to the legislator ----- I am writing to you as a constituent and a psychologist/graduate student regarding the Graduate Psychology Education (GPE) Program, which is funded through the Health Resources and Services Administration and administered through the Bureau of Health Workforce. I am writing to urge your support for an \$8.9 million FY 2015 appropriation for the GPE Program, the nation's only federal program dedicated solely to the education and training of doctoral-level psychologists.

4. Concentrate on a single issue -----

5. Be factual ----- The GPE Program provides funds to accredited universities and internship sites through a competitive grant process to support the interprofessional training of psychologists who work with underserved populations (e.g. older adults, children, rural persons, individuals with chronic illness, victims of abuse and trauma, veterans and their families). This funding supports the training of graduate psychology students to provide services to communities (rural and urban), who have little or no access to mental and behavioral health services.

7. Be personal ----- For example, in our local community GPE funding is making a significant difference for older adults, who constitute 13% of our state's population. Through the GPE Program, psychology graduate students provide supervised mental and behavioral services to the elderly in hospital clinics, nursing homes, and homeless shelters. This unique grant program is, in fact, enabling critically needed primary care services to be delivered to underserved populations all across the country.

6. Give justification -----

9. Request a response ----- I urge you to support the Graduate Psychology Education Program, which benefits so many underserved people, especially those in rural communities. If you or your staff would like additional information regarding this grant or the GPE Program, please contact me directly. I look forward to keeping you informed about our progress and working with your office in the future.

8. Be specific about what you want -----

Sincerely,

10. Include your title ----- [NAME/TITLE/INSTITUTION]

11. Keep your letter to one page -----

EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

Sample Letter

[DATE]

1. Use your personal or business address -----

Jane Q. Psychologist, Ph.D.
Psychology Department
Hometown University
Hometown, State 12345

2. Address your legislator properly -----

The Honorable [SENATOR'S FIRST NAME, LAST NAME]
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator [LAST NAME]:

3. State your relationship to the legislator -----

As a constituent and a psychologist/graduate student, I am writing to urge you to cosponsor *The Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act* (the "FAMILY Act"). This legislation would provide workers with partial income when they take time off work to care for their own or a family member's serious medical condition, or for maternity leave following the birth or adoption of a child.

4. Concentrate on a single issue -----

6. Be factual -----

The FAMILY Act provides an inexpensive, common sense structure for funding paid leave to support families in caring for one another. Three states (California, New Jersey, and Rhode Island) have already passed laws to provide paid family medical leave, and most other developed nations throughout the world offer some form of paid leave. The financial cost of family caretaking places economic hardship on many families. These laws work well and it's time for the United States to catch up!

5. Give justification -----

8. Be personal -----

I urge you to become a cosponsor of the FAMILY Act. In doing so, you will demonstrate your commitment to the lives and health of our nation's families. Please let me know if you or your staff would like any additional information on this important legislation, and I look

7. Be specific about what you want -----

9. Request a response -----

forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

10. Include your title -----

Jane Q. Psychologist, Ph.D.
Professor

11. Keep your letter to one page -----

EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

Sample Email

As with most of our communications, the majority of messages are now sent to Capitol Hill via email. With that in mind, the same guidelines for writing a letter apply to email—state you are a constituent, explain why you’re writing, be clear about what you are requesting, and provide your full contact information. With email, focus special attention on immediately establishing your “constituent status” (i.e., state it at the beginning, and provide your full address in the contact information following your name at the end). Responses to email messages vary by office, so do not be surprised if you receive responses from some offices, and none from others.

EMAIL SUBJECT: Act Now to Support Suicide Prevention Programs!

Dear Senator/Representative [*LAST NAME*]:

As a psychologist/graduate student from [*ORGANIZATION/NAME OF INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION*], I am writing to urge you to cosponsor *The Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act Reauthorization*.

The Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act Reauthorization is bipartisan, budget neutral, and would reauthorize and maintain a number of critical programs that address the mental health needs of young people. It strengthens programs administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) by allowing funds to be used for activities such as mental health and substance use disorder services, education, training, and outreach regarding mental health to students, families, faculty, and staff.

First authorized in 2004, *The Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act* has increased access to mental health and substance use disorder services on our nation’s college and university campuses, as well as supported critically important suicide prevention initiatives for states and Tribes. Unfortunately, suicide remains the second-leading cause of death for adolescents and young adults between the ages of 10 and 24. Please ensure that these vital youth suicide programs are maintained through *The Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act Reauthorization*!

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
[*NAME/TITLE/INSTITUTION*]

WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR EMAIL ON CAPITOL HILL?

- 1) A Legislative Correspondent downloads messages.
- 2) Email sender is verified as a constituent.
- 3) Emails are routed, printed, and/or tallied.
- 4) Important/compelling emails are given to a Legislative Assistant.
- 5) Unique/moving emails are shared with Member.
- 6) Email summary given at issue briefing before vote.

EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

Sample Phone Call

Individuals may also call their Member's Capitol Hill office to request action on specific legislation. In this situation, it makes the most sense to call your lawmakers' Capitol office, rather than their district office.

TALKING POINTS FOR PHONE CALL

The Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA)

Identify yourself and explain your relationship with the Senator/Representative.

- Hi, my name is [NAME], and I am calling as a constituent and psychologist/graduate student from [ORGANIZATION/INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION].

Explain why you are calling.

- It is very important to me that Congress pass the *Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA)*.

Establish why ENDA is necessary and what perspective you have as a psychologist/graduate student.

- As psychological professionals, we work to improve the health and well-being of all Americans every day. Data indicate that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people suffer disproportionately from harassment and prejudice in the workplace. Federal workplace protections for LGBT people would serve to reduce discrimination, improve self-esteem, and heighten work productivity and satisfaction.

Ask your Member of Congress to pass ENDA out of committee.

- I urge you to vote YES to pass ENDA in the Senate/House. Thank you!

Similar guidelines for writing a letter apply for making an effective advocacy call, with a few additions:

1. Prepare prior to making the call.
2. Know the issue you wish to discuss, your goal, or the action you want the legislator to take. Provide a few compelling facts to convince him or her to take action; feel free to reach out to APA Government Relations for talking points.
3. Find your legislator's phone number on his or her website, or call the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121. When calling the switchboard, give the operator the name of your legislator and ask to be connected to their office.
4. Identify yourself; give your profession, and let them know if you are a constituent.
5. Ask to speak with the staff member who handles the issue.
6. Give the staff person your message (issue, facts, goal) and ask for the support of the legislator.
7. Confirm the lawmaker's position on your issue.
8. Let APA Government Relations know how the call went!



EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

Meeting with Your Legislator

A carefully planned face-to-face meeting with your legislator is the most effective means for conveying your message.

Such a meeting can be arranged while you are visiting Washington. APA GRO staff are always willing to work with you to set up such a meeting, whether you are in town for an APA Governance meeting or for another purpose. In addition, you can always personally arrange for a meeting in your legislator's district office.

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

Call or email your legislator's office. State that you are a constituent, and let them know what subject you want to discuss. If it is clear that the legislator is unable to meet with you, then a very good substitute is a meeting with the relevant Legislative Assistant. Members of Congress have demanding schedules! Do not be surprised or disappointed if you meet with the LA, even if your appointment was scheduled with the legislator.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

If possible, learn as much as you can about the legislator's voting record as it relates to your issue, and read over the Member's biography on their website.

BE ON TIME

But don't be surprised if they are not! Congressional schedules are hectic, and visiting Capitol Hill often requires patience and flexibility.

ESTABLISH TIES

Introduce yourself; state where you reside in the district, and say a little about your involvement (i.e., "I am a psychologist working in the district school"). Establish your connection to the policy issue—why you are an expert. However, don't get bogged down in small talk. You will only have a few precious minutes with the Member, so it is important to keep to your purpose for the meeting.

BE PREPARED

Before your meeting, prepare your information in a digestible, concise form, just as you would when writing a letter or making a telephone call. Know the opposing arguments as well as those in favor of your view. During the meeting, take your cues on how to proceed from the policymaker. If he or she seems familiar with the issue, you can move right ahead. If not, take the opportunity to educate or inform your Member.

BE INQUIRING

Ask your legislator for his or her position on your issue. Know what you want in advance, and ask for it. Be tolerant of differing views, and keep the dialogue open; "thank you for your honesty."

BE RESPONSIVE

Try to answer questions. Do not answer questions if you do not know the answer, but offer to get back to your legislator with the information. After the meeting, use this as an opportunity to follow-up on any unresolved issues, and/or reiterate your message.

BE CONCISE AND TO THE POINT

Busy legislators and staff appreciate short meetings in which the purpose is presented clearly and concisely. Refrain from lecturing.

BE APPRECIATIVE

Thank the staffer or Member for meeting with you.

FOLLOW UP

Send a thank you note after your meeting, capitalizing on the opportunity to restate your points.

Following your Member of Congress on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr is a great way to receive updates, stay informed, and share ideas with your colleagues!

EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

Sample 'Thank You' Letter/Email

1. Use your personal or business address

[DATE]

[ADDRESS]

2. Address your legislator properly

The Honorable [SENATOR'S FIRST NAME, LAST NAME]
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

3. State your purpose for writing

Dear Senator [LAST NAME]:

Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to speak with you and [STAFF NAME] last Thursday regarding the reauthorization of *The Higher Education Act* (HEA). Once again, I would like to urge you to support the American Psychological Association's (APA) proposed amendments to HEA that increase mental and behavioral health services on college campuses through provisions like *The Campus Care and Counseling Act*.

4. State your specific request

5. Summarize main talking points of meeting

As I explained, psychological services on campus need to address the increasing number of students seeking help for a range of mental and behavioral health concerns, including eating disorders, anxiety, stress, alcohol abuse, drug use, depression, and suicide. Moreover, there is an increasing awareness that if these problems are not addressed early, many college students will struggle to stay in school and ultimately fail to graduate.

The proposed *Campus Care and Counseling Act* will make a significant and positive difference on our nation's college campuses. For example, on a recent Depression Screening Day held on our campus, hundreds of students were screened and identified with depression and anxiety disorders that, if left untreated, would impair a student's capacity to learn and flourish academically. I also know there are many other students who are struggling with eating disorders, and substance abuse. A program, such as the proposed *Campus Care and Counseling Act*, would increase access to much needed mental and behavioral health services and go a long way to help students achieve their full potential.

6. Elaborate on request

8. Close by restating your request

It is with this in mind that I urge you to support APA's recommendations for the reauthorization of *The Higher Education Act*, including the proposed *Campus Care and Counseling Act*. Once again, thank you for taking the time to meet with me on this important issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you or your staff require any additional information.

7. Be personal

9. Include your title

Sincerely,
[NAME/TITLE/INSTITUTION]

10. Keep your letter to one page

EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

Grassroots Efforts and APA's Federal Action Network

APA'S FEDERAL ACTION NETWORK

Grassroots activities represent the most effective means of getting psychology's message to Capitol Hill, and APA's Federal Action Network provides a simple platform for grassroots outreach. Activities through the Network involve participating in letter, email, and phone campaigns. Reaching out to Congress at the same time as hundreds or thousands of other psychologists and graduate students maximizes the impact of your efforts.



CALLS TO ACTION

At the start of a campaign, APA sends an **action alert** to Network members, as well as APA Divisions, Governance, and listservs. These alerts provide background information on the issue and requested action, as well as links to Network tools. APA only circulates an action alert when it is very likely for this type of mobilization to make a big impact.

As a Network member, when you receive an alert, clicking on the "Take Action" link opens a new page in your web browser. This tool connects you to the message intended for your Members of Congress. A **call alert** contains talking points and phone numbers for your Members of Congress. An **email alert** contains a form email that you can easily personalize to reflect your experiences or knowledge of how an issue impacts your state or district.

Over the last decade, more than 20,000 activists have sent nearly 45,000 advocacy messages to Congress on issues of importance to psychology.

RECENT APA ACTION ALERT ISSUES:

- Campus mental health and suicide legislation
- Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) funding
- International Violence Against Women Act
- Graduate Psychology Education
- Unemployment insurance
- National Science Foundation funding
- Paid family and medical leave
- Gender wage gap
- Student loan interest rates
- Federal funding for child care
- Evidence-based home visiting programs
- LGBT employment non-discrimination
- Minority Fellowship Program funding
- Social and emotional learning
- National Institutes of Health funding

Melba Vasquez, PhD, ABPP,
Former APA President



"I became a psychologist not to observe society from a distance, but rather to use the scientific understanding of our field to promote social justice and improve the lives of others. We as APA members have a tremendous opportunity through the Federal Action Network to help shape the laws and policies that directly affect psychology and the populations we work with and we can make a real difference in our society."

CONCLUSION

You Make the Difference for Psychology!

WHY SHOULD YOU BECOME MORE POLITICALLY AWARE AND INVOLVED?

Decisions made each and every day by Congress have an impact on psychology and the communities you serve. Remember that your elected officials routinely make decisions about federal health, education, research, and social welfare programs. Legislators rely upon the expressed views of their constituents, the information of experts, and their own opinions to make important decisions. As a psychologist and as a citizen, you have a right and a responsibility to inform those decisions.



Photo Credit: Architect of the Capitol (AOC) , 2011

APPENDIX I

Frequently Used Terms

Act: A bill or measure passed into law. Also used to describe a comprehensive piece of proposed legislation with multiple components.

Action Alert: A message sent from APA Government Relations asking APA members to take action on a specific legislative issue.

Amendment: A proposal to change, or an actual change to, a given piece of legislation.

Appropriation bill: Legislation that provides specific funding for an authorized program.

Authorization bill: Legislation that establishes a program or clarifies rights. If establishing a program, legislation specifies its general purpose, how that purpose is to be achieved, and sets a funding ceiling for the program.

Bicameral Legislature: A two-house legislature.

Bill: A proposed law.

Bipartisanship: A policy that garners cooperation or agreement between major political parties. In the United States Congress, used to describe issues that have gained the support of both Democrats and Republicans.

Budget: An annual proposal that outlines anticipated federal revenue and designates expenditures for the upcoming fiscal year.

Calendar: The list of bills or resolutions to be considered by committees or by either chamber.

Chairman: Member of the majority party who presides over the work of a committee or subcommittee.

Committee: In the legislature, a group of lawmakers who review and hold public hearings on issues or bills within their designated jurisdiction. Most bills win committee approval before it can be considered by the full House or Senate.

Conference Committee: A temporary, ad-hoc panel composed of House and Senate conferees that is formed for the purpose of reconciling differences in legislation that has passed both chambers. Conference committees are usually convened to resolve bicameral differences on major and controversial legislation.

Congressional Session: Refers to the two-year cycle of activities of the legislative branch. Proposed legislation introduced during a two-year Congress may be taken up at any time during that period, but once the session has ended, pending measures are no longer viable and must be introduced anew in the next Congress to be considered.

Congressional Resolution: A formal statement of a decision or opinion by the House, Senate, or both, which does not carry the force of law.

Continuing Resolution: A joint resolution of Congress to provide continued funding for government agencies generally at the same rate as the previous year's appropriations, which have not yet been funded through the enactment of that year's appropriations bills.

Deficit: The fiscal year difference between what the federal government takes in from taxes and other revenues, called receipts, and the amount of money the Government spends, called outlays.

Drop a Bill: A term that refers to the introduction of a bill (i.e. the formal process of introducing legislation involves "dropping a bill" into the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives' hopper).

Filibuster: A procedural practice in the Senate whereby a Senator purposefully refuses to relinquish the floor to either delay proceedings or prevent a vote on a controversial issue.

Fiscal Year: The financial operating year of the federal government, beginning October 1st and ending September 30th of the next calendar year.

Hearing: A meeting of a committee of Congress, usually open to the public, to obtain information and/or opinions on proposed legislation or a general topic.

House of Representatives: Known as the "lower chamber" of the United States Congress. The House comprises 435 Representatives that serve two-year terms. Each state is guaranteed at least one seat in the House, and the remaining seats are apportioned among the states according to population.

Joint Committee: A committee consisting of Members of both the House and Senate; such committees oversee the Library of Congress and conduct investigations.

APPENDIX I

Frequently Used Terms

Legislative Assistant (LA): The Congressional staff member in charge of a particular issue or issue area.

Majority Leader: Leader of the majority party in either the House or the Senate.

Markup: The review and revision of a piece of legislation by committee Members through the amendment process.

Minority Leader: Leader of the minority party in either the House or the Senate.

Motion to Recommit: The procedural motion on the House or Senate floor that will traditionally give the minority party one last opportunity to amend or kill a bill before final passage.

National Debt: the total amount of money the federal government has borrowed to finance deficit spending over the years.

Override: An action taken by Congress to reverse a Presidential veto, requiring two-thirds majority in each chamber.

Omnibus Appropriations Bill: Legislation that packages two or more regular appropriations bill into a larger single bill.

Pocket Veto: When the President withholds approval of a bill after Congress has adjourned, thereby killing the bill without a formal veto.

Power of the Purse: Congress' power to raise taxes and appropriate funds from the Treasury.

President of the Senate: Also known as the President Pro Tempore, the Vice President of the U.S. officially presides over the Senate, especially during times of very important debate.

Quorum: The number of Senators or Representatives who must be present in their respective chambers before business can be conducted.

Ranking Member: Senior member of the minority party on a committee.

Reauthorization: Renews, either with or without changes, a previously approved program.

Recess: Marks a temporary end to the business of the Congress and sets a time for the next meeting.

Rider: A provision attached to a bill—to which it may or may not be related—in order to secure its passage. Riders are often attached to appropriations bills.

Safety-Net Programs: Guarantee certain levels of benefits to individuals who meet eligibility requirements set by law. These programs are “off-budget” and are, therefore, not a part of the annual appropriations process. Such programs include Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

Senate: Known as the “upper chamber” of the United States Congress. The Senate consists of 100 Members – two from each state. While each Senator’s term of office is six years, the terms are staggered so that one third of the Senate is up for reelection every two years.

Seniority: A legislative practice that assigns the Chair and Ranking Member of a committee or subcommittee to the Member of the majority and minority with the longest continuous service on the committee.

Speaker of the House: The presiding officer in the House of Representatives. The Speaker is elected by the majority party of the House and is next in the line of succession for the Presidency after the Vice President.

Sponsor: The first Member in the House or Senate to introduce a bill. After the bill is introduced, other Members of Congress show support for the bill by becoming “cosponsors.”

Subcommittee: A few Members of a larger committee appointed to review particular bills and/or issues, and make recommendations on its disposition to the full committee.

Suspension of Rules: A procedure used by the House of Representatives that streamlines consideration of non-controversial measures by prohibiting floor amendments, limiting debate to 40 minutes, and requiring a two-thirds majority for passage.

Table a Bill: A motion to remove a bill from consideration.

Unanimous Consent: A streamlined procedure for adopting non-controversial measures.

Veto: Disapproval of a bill or resolution by the President.

Whip: A legislator who is chosen to be an assistant to the leader of the party in the House or Senate and whose job is to marshal support for legislation. This legislator “whips” votes.

APPENDIX II

Federal Resources

THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

United States Congress

www.congress.gov

Information on current and past legislation, public laws, appropriations, legislative activity, Members of Congress, the Congressional Record, and more.

U.S. House of Representatives

www.house.gov

Information specific to the House chamber, including House Members, legislative process, committees, calendars, activities, and bills.

United States Senate

www.senate.gov

Information specific to the Senate chamber, including Senate Members, legislative process, committees, calendars, activities and bills.

United States Congressional Committees

www.congress.gov/committees

Links to all House of Representatives and Senate committees, which have jurisdiction over specific bills, issues, agencies, programs, and activities.

Congressional Budget Office

www.cbo.gov

Nonpartisan, in-depth analysis of legislative, budgetary, and economic issues impacting federal lawmaking and budgeting processes.

Government Accountability Office

www.gao.gov

At the request of Members of Congress, provides nonpartisan evaluations, audits, and investigations related to executive branch programs and issues of national and global importance.

Library of Congress

www.loc.gov

An agency of the Legislative Branch of the U.S. government, the Library includes several internal divisions, including the Congressional Research Service.

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The White House

www.whitehouse.gov

Resources pertaining to the President, Cabinet members, Executive Office of the President, and other entities within the White House Office

USA.gov

www.usa.gov

Information about activities of Executive Branch agencies, including services, grants, and programs.

Executive Office of the President

www.usa.gov/Agencies/Federal/Executive/EOP.shtml

Links to White House offices and agencies, such as the National Security Council and Office of Science and Technology Policy.

Federal Executive Branch Agencies

www.usa.gov/Agencies/Federal/Executive.shtml

Links to the websites of top-level Executive departments, which contain additional information and links to sub-agencies, offices, etc.

GOVERNMENT IN ACTION!

C-SPAN

www.c-span.org

Live and archived House and Senate floor proceedings, committee hearings, and press conferences, call-in shows, White House and Executive Branch agency briefings, panel discussions, and more.

Clerk of the House

www.clerk.house.gov

Streaming House floor proceedings.

Senate Floor Webcast

www.senate.gov/floor

Streaming Senate floor proceedings.

White House Live

www.whitehouse.gov/livestream

Streaming live and archived White House briefings and other content.

APA GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Additional Resources



WEBPAGES

APA Government Relations

www.apa.org/about/gr

Additional information about APA Government Relations, including our current legislative initiatives.

- **Education Government Relations Office**
www.apa.org/about/gr/education/
- **Public Interest Government Relations Office**
www.apa.org/about/gr/pi/
- **Science Government Relations**
www.apa.org/about/gr/science/

APA'S FEDERAL ACTION NETWORK

Action Alerts

<http://advocate.apa.org>

A listing of APA's current action alerts, recent news and events from APA Government Relations, and resources to find your elected officials.

CONTACT APA GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

APA Government Relations Staff Listing

www.apa.org/about/gr/contact

Email Inquiries

Please contact: gro@apa.org

