

Advocacy 101: Prepping for Local and National Visits

Adapted and updated from a presentation by EnglishUSA's former educational consultants Washington Partners, LLC as well as NAFSA & TESOL Advocacy Day resources.

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@IEPSintheUSA
#ENGLISHUSA



What is Advocacy?

- Organized activism in support of an idea or cause
- Consists of individual constituents contacting their elected officials about issues that are important to them
- Involves establishing on-going relationships that can be leveraged to educate and influence policy makers

Why advocate?

- Educate Member of Congress/Staff about IEPs
- Build a relationship with YOUR Member of Congress



Why Advocate?

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Lawmakers are guided by their belief and values system

Senate: deliberative, thoughtful check on the House -- more easily swayed by passions of the public



Unbiased, independent research to justify policies/provide political cover

HEALTH



“Politics” and listening to constituents

Adapted from B. Fitch (2010). *Citizen's Handbook to Influencing Elected Officials*. TheCapitol.Net, Alexandria, VA.

EnglishUSA: Previous Lobbying Efforts

EnglishUSA (then AAIEP) was instrumental in passing the Accreditation Bill in 2011:

- Use of a lobbyist
- More regulation for IEPs = evening the playing field internationally, and regulate ourselves before anyone else does it
- IEP accreditation mandate: all IEPs that accept students on F-1 student visas must be accredited.
- Not an immigration issue!



Who are we advocating for, to, as?

Advocate FOR

- Our students
- Our programs
- International education
- Exchange programs
- Easier entry into the USA for legitimate applicants



Advocate TO

- Federal, state & local agencies and legislators
- Campus governmental liaison
- Institutional leadership



Advocate AS

- A voter aka constituent
- A professional with expertise
- A representative of an institution or organization
- A member of EnglishUSA



Reminder: Your role and your institution

Anyone can advocate as a private citizen, but it is always important to find out what your organization's policies are before you start advocating.

“We make it a point to advise our faculty/staff to follow the direction of our legal office in only engaging in political activities on their own personal time and without use of university computer, etc.”

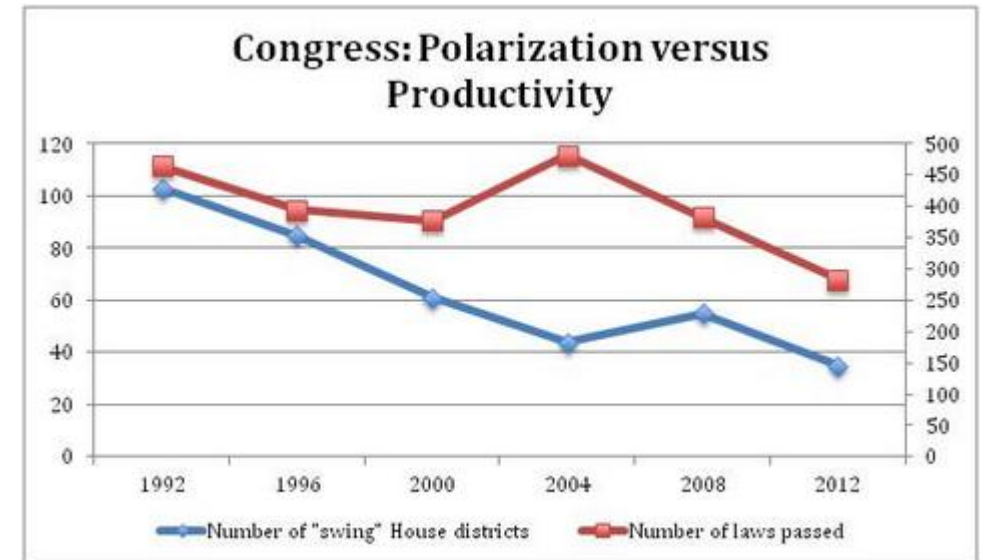
- Legislative Liaison

Georgia State University



Climate in Washington

- Highly-partisan Congress characterized by unprecedented dysfunction
- Administration's priorities are on healthcare, budget, tax reform, infrastructure, building up defense spending
- IEP-related issues include impact of the travel ban, immigration reform, State Department funding



Who's in Charge in the 115th Congress?

- **Senate**
 - **51 Republicans**
 - **47 Democrats**
 - **2 Independents**
- **House**
 - **236 Republicans**
 - **193 Democrats**
 - **6 vacancies**



Congressional Leadership



U.S. House Leadership:

- Speaker of the House: Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI)
- Minority Leader: Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)

U.S. Senate Leadership:

- Majority leader: Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY)
- Senate Minority Leader: Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY)

Senate Committee Leadership

U.S. Senate Judiciary

- Chair: Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA)
- Ranking: Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)

U.S. Senate HELP (Health, Education, Labor, Pension):

- Chair: Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN)
- Ranking member: Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA)



House Committee Leadership

U.S. House Judiciary

- Chair: Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-VA)
- Ranking: Rep. John Conyers (D-MI)



U.S. House Education & Workforce:


- Chair: Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC)
- Ranking member: Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA)



Before the Visit

Step #1: Find and Research “Your People”



1. Find out who your representatives are and which committees they serve on:
<https://www.connectingourworld.org/lookup>
2. Go to their websites (directed from site above)
House: lastname.house.gov
Senate: lastname.senate.gov
3. Follow them on Twitter 
4. Put their DC and district office phone numbers in your phone
5. Capital Switchboard: 202-224-3121
6. Sign up for Action Alerts with Connecting Our World

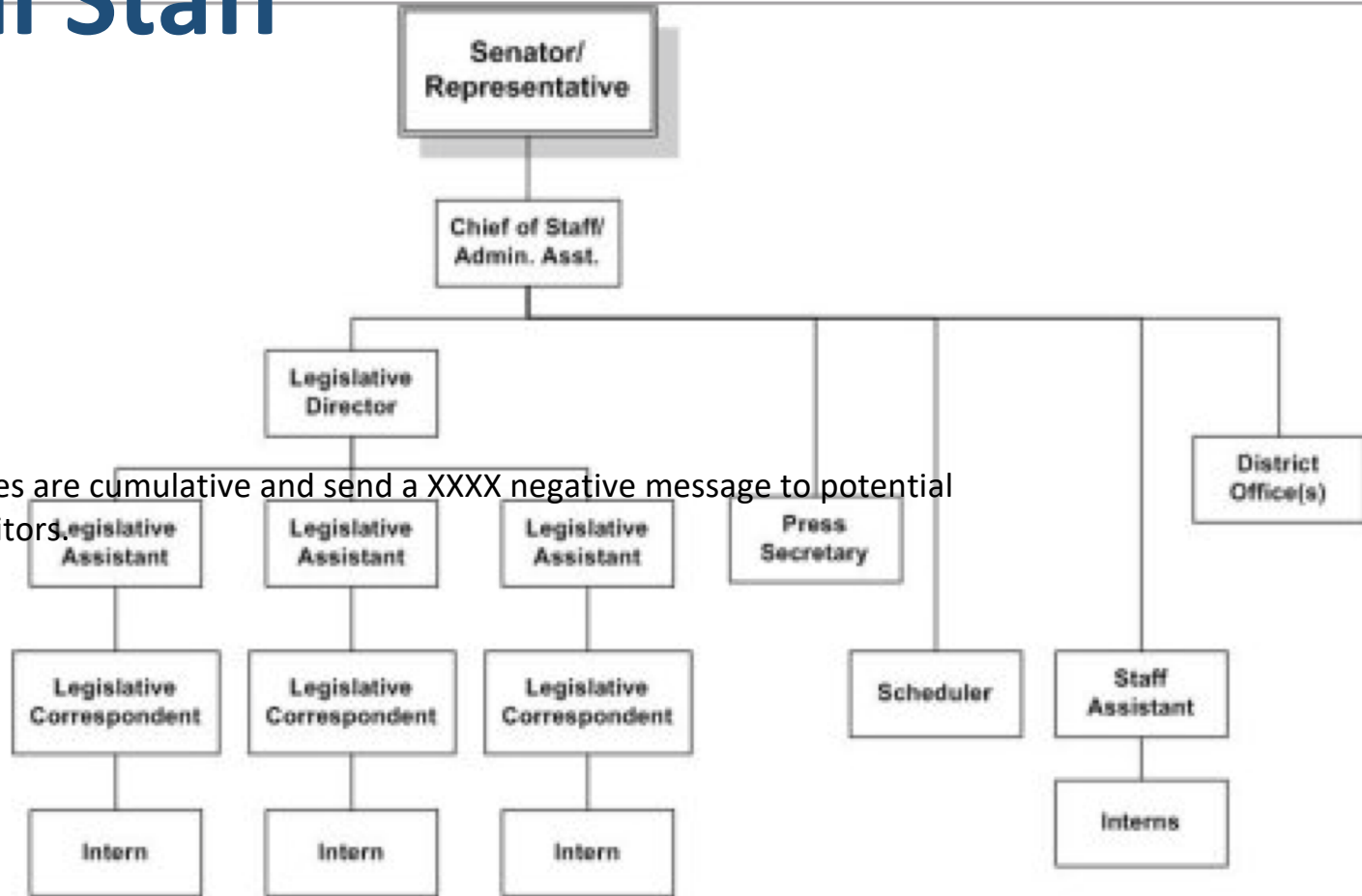
Congressional Staff

Many offices have schedulers who will arrange the meetings for you with either your MOC (rare, but not impossible) or a legislative assistant or director

Resource to find your MOCs staffers:

<https://cqrcengage.com/fcnl/stafflookup>

These issues are cumulative and send a XXXX negative message to potential student visitors.



Before the Visit

Step #2: Schedule an appointment

- Use the information from the previous slide to contact the scheduler in your MOC's office
- Write an email to request a meeting

Dear XXXXXX

I hope Senator XXX and the entire staff are doing well this summer. I'm writing to request an appointment with XXXXXX or a staff member to discuss the status for the support of international students and English language learners in the United States, as well as its economic impact on the State of XXXXXX. In particular, we'd like to share information about YYYYY.

Three of us from XXXX will be coming together to discuss relevant issues. We have time in the later morning on XXXXX or early afternoon YYYY.

Thank you in advance for assisting us with the appointment!

Before the Visit

Step #3: Do your homework and find out...

- Member's party affiliation, committee assignments, bio and interests
- Current context/climate for your issue
- Who are you meeting with?
- Location of meetings
- Background on accreditation bill

Before the Visit

Step Three: Know Your Numbers

- Provide concrete numbers
- Do a rough estimate of the IEPs in your state and/or district and calculate the economic impact.
- Plan an outline of what you will discuss and who will say what
- Prepare a one-pager with numbers





For more than 30 years, **EnglishUSA**, the American Association of Intensive English Programs, has been serving university/college and independent programs that provide English as a second language for prospective undergraduate and graduate students, business people, and others interested in learning more about the U.S. culture

Economic Impact of English Language Programs in the U.S.

- o In addition to myriad foreign policy and academic contributions international students make to American communities, the Association of International Educators (NAFSA) latest analysis finds that international students studying at **Georgia** U.S. colleges and universities contributed more than **\$683 million dollars** and supported more than 9,400 jobs. Congressional District 05 benefits from **\$352 million** of this state total
- o In **Georgia**, there are **eight college and university language programs who are members of EnglishUSA, along with three proprietary programs**; the majority of these students continue in degree programs and thus contribute even further to the **Georgia** economy for many years
- o Language students participate in **EnglishUSA** programs through personal funds or privately funded scholarship at **no cost to Georgia taxpayers**



Insert economic information from your state



Insert EnglishUSA information

National Security

Language programs support U.S. national security and foreign policy interests:

- o In meetings with embassies as well as with students, universities and organizations here and overseas, language program administrators engage in partnerships and collaboration with countries key to U.S. foreign policy interests
- o U.S. leadership and interests around the world are advanced when students return back to their countries with positive experiences
- o Current student visa guidelines (non-immigrant student visas) efficiently determine and screen bona fide language and degree students; travel bans threaten the view that others have of the U.S. and will impact international student enrollment



Tailor and sequence information based on what you know about your Members of Congress (i.e. Economic impact and National Security 'fronted')

Mutual Understanding

- o Language programs are usually the first step and first introduction to the U.S. for students who end up spending many years in the state
- o Students experience quality language programs provided in **Georgia** and while improving language skills, they also foster relationships with Americans and other English-speaking **Georgia** citizens in multiple contexts, gaining more positive view of the U.S., **Georgia and the South**
- o Generations of foreign policy leaders have viewed international students as one of American's greatest foreign policy assets
- o **EnglishUSA** (then AAIEP) was instrumental in passing the Accreditation Bill in 2011, required all language programs be accredited and opening up legitimate access to educational and cultural experiences for international students



At the visit: An outline

- Introduce yourself and your colleagues
- Give them background on what you do and what you are here
- Provide background context and data
- Share stories about impact students have had on your community
- Be ready with a concrete “ask”
- Thank them for their time
- Leave behind detailed information and your business card



At the visit: A few pointers



- Be on time (security lines are sometimes long!)
- Build a connection
- Stay on message
- Be clear and concise
- Share specific stories
- Make a clear, actionable request
- Be positive
- Leave time for questions

Don't be surprised if...

- The staff are very young
- The meeting takes place in the hall
- The staffer is not familiar with IEPs
- You can't answer one of their questions
- Your staffer doesn't commit immediately



After the visit: Follow Up



- Always leave something behind
- Invite them to your program to visit or bring students along
- Follow up with thank you email and any information on unanswered questions
- Invite elected officials and the media to local events, panel discussions
- Recognize an elected official with an award

Finally....

- Review your Members' interests and affiliations prior to going
- Stay on message and be precise
- Keep it positive
- Illustrate the need and impact of international students in your community (with numbers)
- Keep building the relationship after the meeting
- Have fun!

Call to Action for EnglishUSA Members

- Keep Members' phone numbers in phone
- Sign up for newsletters
- Attend town hall meetings
- Research what committees are working on
- Schedule an in-district meeting with colleagues in your region
- Remember: Advocacy is a marathon, not a sprint!

**your VOTE
is your VOICE**

Advocacy Resources

Resources » Advocacy Resources

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The resources provided below can assist our membership with advocacy efforts at the national and local levels.

Statements from EnglishUSA

[TESOL, EnglishUSA, and UCIEP Joint Statement on Social Media Vetting of International Students \(May 29, 2017\)](#)

[TESOL and UCIEP on Possible Limitations on US Student Visas from China \(March 21, 2018\)](#)

[TESOL-EnglishUSA-UCIEP Joint Statement on Supporting International Students and Intensive English Programs in the United States \(January 19, 2017\)](#)

[EnglishUSA 1/23/17 Statement to Members](#)

Resources to Contact Members of Congress (MOC) and/or Set Up Visits

[Congressional Staff Lookup: Find the scheduler for your MOCs](#)

[Congress.gov](#)

[Tracking the United States Congress](#)

[NAFSA/Connecting our World Advocacy Toolkit](#)

[NAFSA Issue Net](#)

[Connecting our World](#)

Advocacy Resources from Relevant Organizations

[NAFSA/Connecting our World Advocacy Toolkit](#)

[NAFSA Issue Net](#)

[Connecting our World](#)

[NAFSA International Student Economic Value Tool](#)

[TESOL Advocacy Resources](#)

[Alliance for International Exchange \(must be a member to access some resources\)](#)

[AIEA Advocacy Resources](#)

[NACAC Advocacy Resources \(includes both state and federal legislative issues\)](#)

[DHS Press Releases](#)

Advocacy How-To Guides

[Indivisible Guide \(grassroots advocacy advice\)](#)

[Countable](#)

[Open States: Discover Politics in Your States](#)

Sample Documents

[One-pager: Sample document with state data \(MA\) from NAFSA Economic Tool](#)

[One-pager: Sample document with state data \(GA\) from NAFSA Economic Tool](#)

Advocacy Resources: EnglishUSA Website!