



Meeting with Members of Congress vs. Meeting with Staffers

When you come to Washington or visit your legislators at home, you might get to meet with the Member of Congress or you might meet with a staff member. Both are important. Both are able to influence policy and will listen to what you have to say. They have different roles. Please do not take offense if you do not get to meet with the Member of Congress. Staffers are important too.

MEMBER OF CONGRESS

- » Members represent the people of their district – the area where the Member is from. They are voted on by these people and serve their state or district in the United States Congress. The people who vote on the members are called constituents. And that is YOU!!
- » Members write and vote on policies.
- » Two of their main responsibilities are representing their constituents, and lawmaking, but they also can help educate the public on laws, oversee that laws are being used correctly by other branches of government, and help their individual constituents with issues or problems.
- » When you meet with a Member, you are meeting with the person who will vote on the bills.

STAFFER FOR THE MEMBER OF CONGRESS

- » A paid employee of the United States Congress, who is hired to work for a certain Member of Congress.
- » Unlike Members, staffers do not hold a public office and people do not vote for them. The elected Member decides and hires staffers.
- » Staff members have different responsibilities, depending on their job title. Some examples are chief of staff, scheduler, policy advisor, legislative assistant, communications director or legislative correspondent. These are just a few.
- » The staffers help connect the Members of Congress to their constituents.
- » When you meet with a staffer, it might feel like they are not as important as the Member, but they do a lot of the work and recommend how their bosses should vote. The Member makes the final decision, but the staffer may be able to give you more time for your meeting. The Members are very busy.