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Global Poverty Action
July 2014
Meet Face-to-Face with
Congress

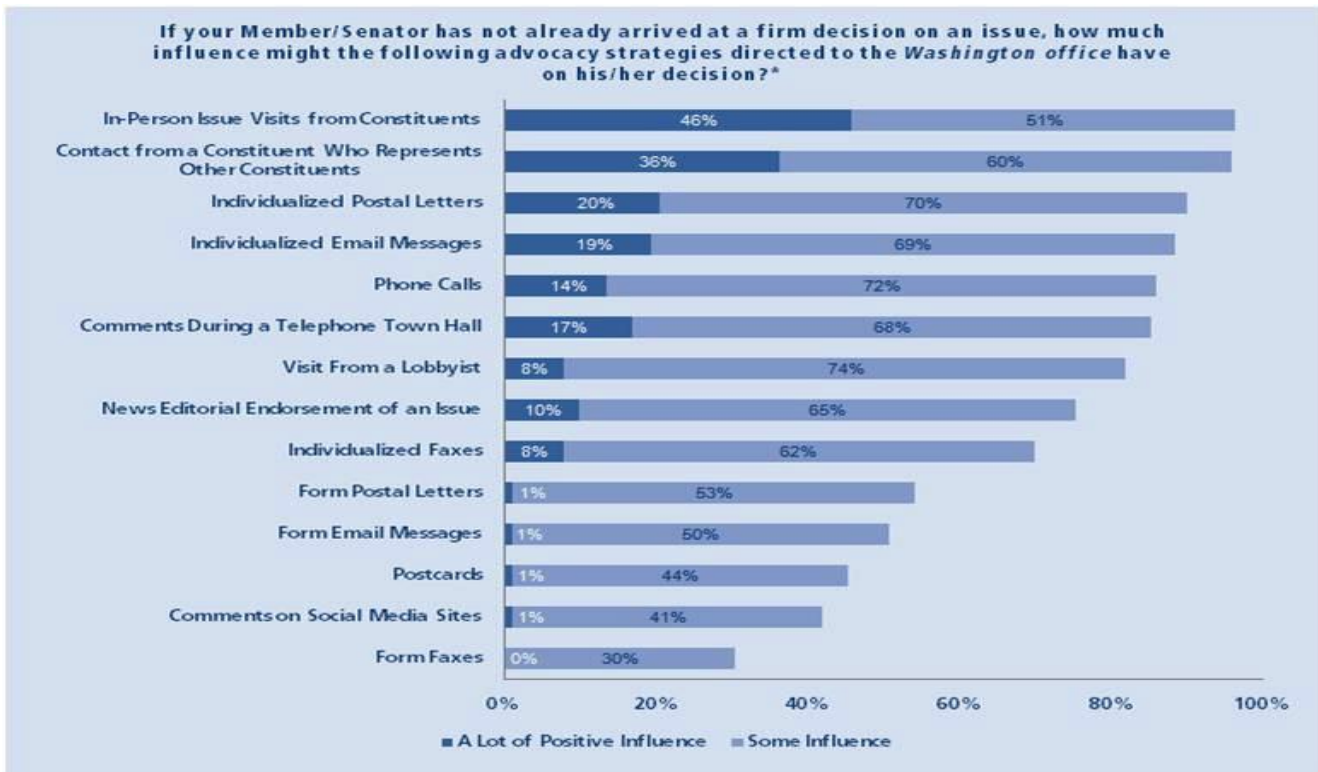
Request Face-to-Face Meetings for the August Recess

“I just love RESULTS, it’s a fantastic organization...The RESULTS volunteers that are coming to visit me now are just fantastic. All the people in the world are really lucky to have such hardworking and committed advocates working for their cause. I’ve met with RESULTS in the district and in Washington—it really makes a difference—I can’t emphasize that enough. Think about it, there are so many issues on every member of Congress’ desk and even on their agenda. How do you lift something so important as this out of the pile? It’s because of the grassroots work that you do. I’ve been on both sides of the aisle as an organizer, as an activist, as a member of Congress. I think sometimes people on the activist and volunteer side aren’t aware of the impact it can make—but I am the living example of how much progress RESULTS has made in helping me be a better advocate.”

— Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL)

The Most Powerful Action You Can Take

RESULTS has long promoted face-to-face visits between constituents and members of Congress as the most effective way to build the political will for change. A recent poll of more than 250 congressional staff by the [Congressional Management Foundation](#) (CMF) confirms that face-to-face constituent meetings with our members of Congress is the most influential tactic we have in our toolkit. The poll also found that constituents who communicate with congressional offices in a *personal* manner (vs. impersonal online actions, petitions, or form letters) are more influential than paid lobbyists.



The 113th Congress is in its second and final year. With elections coming up in November for all representatives and about 1/3 of the senators, many of them will be particularly receptive to speaking with voters and constituents during recesses and at town hall events.

Our goal in 2014 is to meet face-to-face with all of the representatives we cover and at least one-third of the senators we cover. Let’s set up face-to-face meetings during the long August recess (all month) to let representatives and senators know that constituents care about ending preventable child deaths by providing vaccinations and basic nutrition.

Many members of Congress are still unfamiliar with foreign policy issues, particularly life-changing poverty-focused development assistance. We want to educate and inspire our legislators about the issues we work on, offer to work in partnership with them, and call them into action. Now is the time to use videos, stories, and persistence to show them the power of child survival interventions.

Help Us Reach Big Goals for 2014

Since we know that constituent meetings are more influential than anything else, we have set some important targets to increase our impact in 2014. Requesting meetings now will set you up for meetings in August, September, and October, which will help us hit these targets:

- Meet face-to-face with every representative RESULTS covers and 1/3 of the senators we cover.
- Expand our reach on global issues to cover 12 additional senators (for a total of 92) and 69 additional representatives (for a total of 260).

Call the Scheduler Now to Set Up a Meeting for August

You can meet with your members of Congress throughout the year when they are in your district/state. They are often less distracted and have more time to meet with constituents when they are away from Washington. Members are typically in their districts from Friday to Monday (long weekends). In addition, there are congressional recesses (“district work periods”) when they are home for a week or more. Congress will have the following recesses: August 1-31, September 1-7, October 3-31 (for campaigning). Set up meetings now!

1. **Request your meeting now** to increase the likelihood of getting a recess meeting.
2. **Find contact information** for the various offices [through the RESULTS website](#). You can find names of the Washington, DC schedulers under the “Staff” tab. You can also dial directly to the Capitol switchboard operator at (202) 224-3121 and ask for your representative’s or senators’ offices.
3. Before calling, **prepare what to say** (see below).
4. Once connected to the office, **ask for the scheduler**. Leave a succinct voicemail if they don’t answer.
5. **Use the following conversation** as a template for building a relationship with the scheduler:
 - Hi, my name is XXXX, and I am a constituent. I live in XXXX. I am also a volunteer with RESULTS, a constituent group working to end hunger and poverty.
 - RESULTS has a proven track record of working with legislators from all backgrounds to support smart and cost-effective policies to break the cycle of poverty.
 - I know that the representative/senator values input from constituents on the issues that matter to us. With that in mind, our local RESULTS group would like to schedule meeting with the representative/senator while he/she is the local office in August—the earlier the better. Can I work with you to set that up today?
 - There will be a number of constituents at the meeting and we would like to discuss easy ways to save children’s lives. We’d also like to hear from the representative/senator on these issues. There are some key moments childhood vaccines coming up that we want to talk about as well.
 - Our representative/senator plays a very important role in determining our nation’s course of action on poverty alleviation, security, and economic growth, and we feel RESULTS is a great partner for him/her on these issues.
6. **Be sure to note the name of the scheduler and thank him/her for their assistance**. If you don’t get a firm answer when you call, ask when you can follow up and let the scheduler know that meeting soon is important giving the timing of some of the issues. If the member of Congress has no time to meet in your chosen month, ask for a meeting at the first available time. Remain persistent!
7. **Send your request in writing**. Most schedulers will ask for your request in writing. [Visit our website for a draft meeting request letter that you can personalize.](#)
8. **Follow up, follow up**. Did we mention you should follow up? Check weekly with the scheduler.
9. **For additional tips on how to schedule your face-to-face meeting**, check out our [Activist Milestone: Meet Face-to-Face with Your Member of Congress](#). You can find the Milestones under the “Skills” tab.

Creating Political Will

Your Regional Coordinator and/or RESULTS staff is available to help make the meeting as strategic and impactful as possible. We can provide you with a [meeting planning guide](#), guidance on issues to cover, and stories or videos to use. Constituents are the only people who can hire and fire members of Congress, so our voices are important to them. Though it may seem scary, meeting with your members of Congress is the only way they know what we want them to do.