

September 6, 2011

Dear Scholar:

I am working with Linda Harootyan on the Hartford Faculty Scholars Program Policy Leadership Institute. As you know, the institute takes place in Washington, DC, on October 19 – 21, 2011. The speeches and workshops during the Policy Leadership Institute will provide you with information and training on the key elements of engaging in the policy process. The goal is to help you make public policy a part of your academic life.

One of the most important and rewarding activities of the institute is your visit to Capitol Hill, which will take place on Friday, October 21. We would like you to meet with the staff of the U.S. Senators and member of the House of Representatives from your university's district and/or your home district in order to introduce yourself and your work. As a constituent, you have the right to voice your interests and concerns to your elected representatives.

Now is the time to set up these Hill appointments. They should be scheduled at least a couple of weeks *before* you arrive in D.C.!

Here are a few guidelines to help you establish contact and schedule an appointment. **Please remember that this is not a high-pressure meeting, but just a chance to introduce yourself and your work to the people who represent you in Congress (or their staff), and to offer yourself as a resource.**

- To find the contact information and bios of your senators and representatives, go to the following websites: www.house.gov and www.senate.gov and use your zip code to find the individual member's website. (You can also research legislation on these sites.)
- If you know your legislators' names, you may call the Capitol switchboard for the phone numbers of the offices (202-224-3121).
- In addition, we recommend that you use the Library of Congress's website <http://thomas.loc.gov/> to look up any bills that have been introduced in your research or specialty area. This will give you a better sense of what Congress is doing about your issues prior to your meetings. You may want to consider meeting with the staff of a member who has introduced a bill for which you have a special interest.
- It is unlikely that you will meet with the actual Member of Congress. Do not be discouraged by this. The legislative assistant to the member is a

valuable conduit to the Member of Congress. You might end up meeting with the legislative assistant, the legislative director, an intern, or a committee staff person.

- When you call to make the appointment, state your full name and title, and ask to speak with the legislative assistant that handles health care or aging issues. If s/he is not available (often the case), then ask if you may leave a voicemail message for her/him.
- Leave your e-mail address as well as phone number.
- When you reach the legislative assistant or her/his voicemail, again state your full name, your title and where you are doing your research. Explain the purpose of the Policy Leadership Institute and your role in it. State that you would like to meet with the person covering aging or health issues. If the staffer has time, give a quick explanation of your research. Ask for a meeting for the time below. *Be sure to get the full name of the staffer with whom you will be meeting and the office room number.*
- **The day and time for these meetings is Friday, October 21st anytime from 11:15 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.**
- After you have received a time for the meeting, compose a brief e-mail to the staffer with whom you will be meeting to confirm your appointment time and thank her/him in advance for taking the time to meet with you. Be sure to include your contact information.
- Plan on bringing a few handouts with you to your Hill appointment to leave with the staff person: **a business card, if you have one, a brief bio, and a very brief summary of your research.**
- In addition to introducing yourself and your work, you may want to discuss a piece of legislation or current public issue that affects your area of research. Let the staff person know what action you would like your legislator to take on the issue.
- Offer to be a resource of background or new information on the issues you discuss with the staff person. With this meeting, you are establishing a relationship with your Member of Congress.
- **Important:** Please let us know as soon as possible of your Hill appointment including the time, place, and person with whom you will be meeting. Send the information to Jenn Kaufer, Hartford Program Assistant, at jkaufer@geron.org.

Quick Tips

- Start contacting congressional offices **now**. Recess is over and schedulers and staffers are back in their offices. It's the perfect time to get on the schedule of the Member of Congress or the staff person **before** the schedules fill up.
- Between your busy schedule and theirs, it may take several attempts before you actual talk with (by phone or by email) the appropriate staffer or the scheduler. Don't give up! You are a constituent; you have the right to visit your legislator.
- Scheduling meetings: Request 30 minutes but accept 15. Get the name of the person you will be seeing and the office room number.
- There are three congressional office buildings on the House side: Cannon, Rayburn, and Longworth.
- There are three on the Senate side: Dirksen, Hart, and Russell.
- Leave yourself 10 minutes to travel among the buildings on each side.
- It is a 20 minute walk between the House side and the Senate side. Keep this in mind when scheduling meetings at senate offices and house offices.
- If you need to, you could take a cab between the two sides of the Hill which takes about 5 minutes.
- We will have maps for you when you arrive at the institute.
- Wear comfortable shoes.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I have a social work background and previously worked on the aging committees in the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives for ten years. I would be pleased to provide assistance if needed. Of course, Linda Harootyan is available to you as well at (202-587-2822 or harootya@geron.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B W Lindberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brian W. Lindberg
Public Policy Advisor
Hartford Faculty Scholars Program
202-789-3606 or brian@consumers.org