

2016 Edition



**COSSA HANDBOOK** *for*  
**SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE RESEARCH**  
**ADVOCACY**



CONSORTIUM *of* SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

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# COSSA Handbook for Social & Behavioral Science Research Advocacy

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*Additional resources—including one-pagers and social and behavioral science success stories—can be found on the COSSA website, [www.cossa.org](http://www.cossa.org).*

## Introduction

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) is a nonprofit advocacy organization working to promote sustainable federal funding for social and behavioral science research and federal policies that positively impact the conduct of research. COSSA (pronounced “*COH-sah*”) serves as a united voice for a broad, diverse network of organizations, institutions, communities, and stakeholders who care about a successful and vibrant social science research enterprise. COSSA membership is institutional and includes professional and disciplinary associations, scientific societies, research centers and institutes, and U.S. colleges and universities.

This handbook is intended to serve as an introduction for COSSA members to the federal government and the policymaking process and provide some of the basics and best practices for advocating for the social and behavioral sciences.

### COSSA’s advocacy and outreach

COSSA monitors the full range of federal issues impacting the social and behavioral science community as a whole, from funding to new research policies and directives.

COSSA advocates during the appropriations process for sustained federal support for social and behavioral science research across the federal agencies. We also advocate for authorizing and other legislation that reflects the importance of these sciences. Within the federal agencies and administration, COSSA weighs in on regulatory and policy issues by submitting comments to and otherwise engaging with agency officials to promote our science.

We strive to both proactively educate the government and the public about the value of social and behavioral science research and to defend these sciences against baseless attacks and criticism.

For matters of particular significance to the COSSA community, we issue **action alerts** to urge our advocates to write to their Members of Congress. We also keep our members informed about emerging issues so they may take action at any time.

### Why we need your help

COSSA works hard every day to communicate the importance of social and behavioral science research to policy makers. But ultimately, the most powerful stories come from people who can speak from experience about what it is like to apply for a federal grant, conduct research, or watch as their findings reach (or fail to reach) a broader audience.

Educating policy makers about social and behavioral science research—and its contributions to sound public policy—is especially important because these sciences are not always well understood on the Hill and even in the federal agencies.

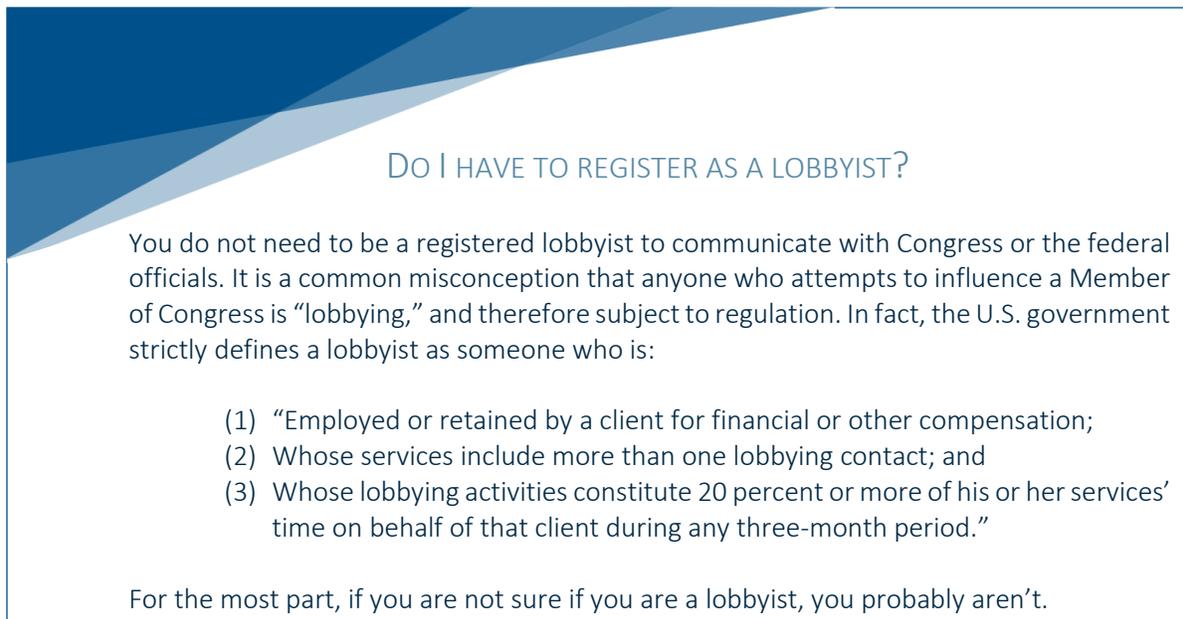
In a survey by the Congressional Management Foundation, 97 percent of Congressional staff said that constituent visits have “some” or “a lot” of influence on an undecided Member—more than any other

strategy for communicating with Congress.<sup>1</sup> And social and behavioral scientists are not just any constituents—they bring invaluable expertise on a wealth of important issues facing our nation.

## COSSA's advocacy and outreach partners

We believe that our message will go further if it comes from many voices. We work closely with the broad community of organizations and individuals who care deeply about the future of the social and behavioral sciences. First and most important are our members, who provide us with expertise and direction on the issues facing their individual disciplines and organizations.

We also work as part of numerous coalitions that advocate for specific issues or federal agencies ranging



**DO I HAVE TO REGISTER AS A LOBBYIST?**

You do not need to be a registered lobbyist to communicate with Congress or the federal officials. It is a common misconception that anyone who attempts to influence a Member of Congress is “lobbying,” and therefore subject to regulation. In fact, the U.S. government strictly defines a lobbyist as someone who is:

- (1) “Employed or retained by a client for financial or other compensation;
- (2) Whose services include more than one lobbying contact; and
- (3) Whose lobbying activities constitute 20 percent or more of his or her services’ time on behalf of that client during any three-month period.”

For the most part, if you are not sure if you are a lobbyist, you probably aren’t.

from human rights to the National Science Foundation. COSSA helps to lead three coalitions—the Coalition to Promote Research (CPR), the Coalition for the Advancement for Health Through Behavioral and Social Science Research (CAHT-BSSR), and the Coalition to Enhance Diversity in Science (CEDS)—and is a member of many others.

COSSA collaborates with other organizations, like the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Association of American Universities, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, and the Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics, to address issues that affect the science community as a whole.

Lastly, we work directly with the federal agencies and Congressional colleagues that support social and behavioral science research.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.congressfoundation.org/projects/communicating-with-congress/face-to-face>

# Congress and the Policy-Making Process

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This section provides a high-level refresher on the basics of Congress and how laws are made.

## Congress 101

Congress, the lawmaking branch of the U.S. government, is divided into two chambers: the Senate and the House of Representatives. A “term” of Congress is two years long (defined by the election cycle), and begins on January 3 of every odd-numbered year. Each year of a Congress’ term is called a “session,” referred to as either the first or second session of the Congress.

The **Senate** is known as the “upper chamber” and is comprised of 100 members, with two Senators representing each state. Senators serve six-year terms with staggered elections, so one-third of the Senate is up for reelection every two years. The longer serving Senator from each state is referred to as the “senior” Senator, and the more recent arrival the “junior” Senator. The Senate is solely responsible for confirming high-level federal positions (such as cabinet secretaries) and ratifying treaties.

The Vice President of the United States presides over the Senate; however, he or she may only vote in cases of a tie. In his or her absence, the *president pro tempore*, who is selected by the chamber (typically the most senior member of the majority party), assumes those duties. At the beginning of every Congressional term, members of each party elect a Majority and Minority Leader who manage their party’s legislative agenda.

The **House of Representatives** is known as the “lower chamber” or “the people’s house” and has 435 members, each representing a single Congressional district. Districts are allocated to states in proportion to their populations, with a guarantee of at least one district per state. Members of the House serve two-year terms, thus the entire chamber is up for reelection every two years. The House is responsible for choosing the President of the United States if the Electoral College is tied. In addition, all spending bills must originate in the House.

Members elect a Speaker of the House at the start of every term to preside over the chamber. Like the Senate, House Members elect Majority and Minority Leaders to guide each party’s legislative agenda.

## Committees

Because much of the work of developing and refining legislation happens within Congressional committees and subcommittees, it is particularly important to reach Members serving on committees whose jurisdiction impacts the social and behavioral sciences. Committees are led by the Chair (from the majority) and the Ranking Member (from the minority). Most Members of Congress sit on multiple committees. The following pages provide an overview of on some of the most important committees for the social and behavioral sciences.

## House Committees

### House Committee on Appropriations

Chair: Harold Rogers (R-KY)

Ranking Member: Nita M. Lowey (D-NY)

Web: <http://appropriations.house.gov>

The House Appropriations Committee is responsible for crafting the legislation that funds the federal government each year. This legislation is divided into twelve individual funding bills, each of which is assigned to a designated subcommittee. These subcommittees review the President's annual budget request, hear testimony from federal agency officials and outside witnesses, and draft legislation that will fund their respective agencies for the coming fiscal year.

Some of the key appropriations subcommittees for social and behavioral science are:

- Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
- Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS)
- Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor-H)

### House Committee on Energy and Commerce

Chair: Fred Upton (R-MI)

Ranking Member: Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ)

Web: <http://energycommerce.house.gov>

The House Energy and Commerce Committee has broad jurisdiction, including over biomedical research and development, consumer affairs and consumer protection, health and health facilities, energy policy, and interstate and foreign commerce. It is an authorizing committee that oversees the Departments of Energy, Health and Human Services, Commerce, and Transportation, as well as the Food and Drug Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Communications Commission, and other agencies.

Energy and Commerce's six subcommittees are:

- Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade
- Communications and Technology
- Energy and Power
- Environment and the Economy
- **Health**
- **Oversight and Investigations**

### House Committee on Education and the Workforce

Chair: John Kline (R-MN)

Ranking Member: Bobby Scott (D-VA)

Web: <http://edworkforce.house.gov>

The House Committee on Education and the Workforce has jurisdiction over education programs (including early childhood, primary, secondary, and adult education) and programs affecting the labor market, such as pensions, job training, employee benefits, and worker health and safety. It oversees the Departments of Education and Labor.

The Committee has four subcommittees:

- Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education
- Workforce Protections
- Higher Education and Workforce Training
- Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions

### House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

Chair: Lamar Smith (R-TX)

Ranking Member: Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Web: <http://science.house.gov>

The House Science Committee has jurisdiction over the National Science Foundation, NASA, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology, as well as issues including energy research, environmental research, and other scientific research and development areas. This Committee is responsible for passing the legislation that authorizes the National Science Foundation.

The Committee has five subcommittees:

- Energy
- Environment
- **Oversight**
- **Research and Technology**
- Space



















## How to follow up

Always send a follow-up email to anyone with whom you have met. Thank them for taking the time to meet and provide any additional information or answers to questions that came up during the meeting. The goal of these emails is not just to be polite; you want to establish a line of communication between you and the Member or staff member in hopes that they will reach out to you and draw on your expertise in the future.

Find organic ways to stay in touch. No one wants to receive frequent unsolicited emails, but you could send updates about your research from time to time if they seemed interested, or forward the occasional press release or news story highlighting research in their district.

Besides following up directly with the Member or their staff, get in touch with COSSA and tell us how your meeting went. COSSA can always follow up on your behalf.

## Sending a letter or email

You may choose to write a letter to your Senator or Representative. Most offices keep tallies of how many letters they receive on a given issue, so writing to your Member of Congress is one way to make your views “count.” You can either send a letter by email or through the post, which takes longer due to security screening measures but is more likely to receive a response (though form letters are the norm). Information on where to send your letter or email will be posted on your Member’s website.

When writing your letter, follow the principles discussed in the “Crafting your message” section above. Be sure to state that you are a constituent and include your job title and affiliation. Make clear why you are writing (your “ask”) and make concise arguments in support of your position. Draw from your own personal experience and try to relate your points back to the district. Keep the letter brief—it should not be longer than one or two pages.

Lastly, forward a copy of your letter to COSSA. We may be able to use it in our own advocacy efforts.

## Calling your Member’s office

Calling your Member’s office is particularly useful when you are focusing on an immediate issue that has a tight timeline (such as an upcoming vote or markup). You can find your Member’s office phone number on their website or by calling the Capitol Switchboard (202-224-3121) and providing the name of your Senator or Representative. Ask to speak with the Member or the staff member who handles science issues.

Make sure you have thought through what you wish to say before you call the office (see the section above on “Crafting your message”). You may want to write out a script or talking points to help organize your thoughts. As always, begin by noting that you are a constituent and explain who you are before moving on to your “ask.” It is very important to be concise, so limit yourself to three or four brief points.

If you would like to continue to engage with the staff member you spoke to, you can ask them for their email address so you may follow up.

## Congress and social media

Social media is becoming an increasingly important way for constituents to voice their opinions to their representatives in Congress. Every office uses social media differently, but nearly every Member of Congress has a Twitter and Facebook account. Some Members use these accounts personally, and some accounts are maintained by staffers. Most offices monitor social media “chatter” about their Members to get a sense of where public opinion stands.

If you are already active on social media, using Facebook or Twitter could be a good way increase the visibility of your other advocacy efforts. When reaching out to your Member on social media:

- **Keep your messages simple and concrete.** Character limits obviously necessitate this on Twitter, but it is a good strategy regardless. Asking your Member to vote yes or no on a particular bill, or thanking them for remarks in favor of your issue are examples of simple outreach strategies.
- **Use hashtags associated with your campaign.** This will help your issue “trend” and can give staffers an easy way to find out more.
  - @COSSADC
  - #Stand4Science
  - #ShowMeTheScience
- **Don’t expect a direct response from your Member—but you may be surprised.** Members receive a lot of messages from constituents on social media, so not receiving a reply is normal. However, some Members are known for actively engaging with constituents on social media.



POPVOX (<http://popvox.com>) is a social media tool specifically for commenting on federal legislation. This free resource provides an additional avenue for weighing in on specific bills. COSSA maintains a POPVOX widget on its website (<http://www.cossa.org/advocacy/take-action/>) for easy access to policy topics important to its members.

## Resources

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### On the web

- The White House** ..... <http://www.whitehouse.gov/>  
Office of Management and Budget ..... <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/>  
Office of Science and Technology Policy ..... <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ostp/>  
*The White House office that advises the president on the effects of science and technology on domestic and international affairs.*
- USA.gov ..... <http://www.usa.gov/>  
*The official web portal of the federal government.*
- Congress** ..... <http://www.congress.gov>  
*Research legislation and public laws.*
- House of Representatives..... <http://www.house.gov/>  
*Access individual Member and Committee webpages.*
- Senate ..... <http://www.senate.gov/>  
*Access individual Senator and Committee webpages.*
- Congressional Budget Office ..... <http://www.cbo.gov/>  
Library of Congress..... <http://www.loc.gov/>  
Government Accountability Office ..... <http://www.gao.gov/>
- Federal Register** ..... <https://www.federalregister.gov/>
- CSPAN ..... <http://www.c-span.org/>  
Capitol Hearings ..... <http://capitolhearings.org/>  
POPVOX ..... <https://www.popvox.com/>

## Federal agencies that support social and behavioral science research

### Department of Agriculture

National Institute of Food and Agriculture ..... <http://nifa.usda.gov/>  
Economic Research Service ..... <http://ers.usda.gov/>  
National Agricultural Statistical Service ..... <http://www.nass.usda.gov/>

### Department of Commerce

Census Bureau ..... <http://census.gov/>  
Bureau of Economic Analysis ..... <http://www.bea.gov/>  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ..... <http://www.noaa.gov/>

### Department of Defense

Minerva Initiative ..... <http://minerva.dtic.mil/>

### Department of Education

Institute of Education Sciences ..... <http://ies.ed.gov/>

### Department of Energy

Energy Information Administration ..... <http://www.eia.gov/>

### Department of Health and Human Services

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality ..... <http://www.ahrq.gov/>  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ..... <http://www.cdc.gov/>  
National Center for Health Statistics ..... <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/>  
National Institutes of Health ..... <http://www.nih.gov/>  
Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research ..... <http://obsr.od.nih.gov/index.aspx/>

### Department of Homeland Security

Science and Technology Directorate ..... <http://www.dhs.gov/science-and-technology/>

### Department of Housing and Urban Development

Office of Policy Development and Research ..... <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/>

### Department of Justice

Bureau of Justice Statistics ..... <http://www.bjs.gov/>  
National Institute of Justice ..... <http://nij.gov/>

### Department of Labor

Bureau of Labor Statistics ..... <http://www.bls.gov/>

### Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs ..... <http://eca.state.gov/>

### Department of Transportation

Bureau of Transportation Statistics ..... <http://www.rita.dot.gov/bts/home/>

National Archives and Records Administration ..... <http://www.archives.gov/>

National Science Foundation ..... <http://nsf.gov/>

National Endowment for the Humanities ..... <http://www.neh.gov/>

United States Institute of Peace ..... <http://www.usip.org/>

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars ..... <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/>

## Glossary

**Act** — Legislation that has been passed by both chambers of Congress and signed by the President, thus becoming a law.

**Amendment** — A proposed or actual change to a piece of legislation or another amendment. Amendments may strike, insert, or strike and insert bill text.

**Appropriations** — Legislation to provide the money required to fund governmental departments, agencies, and programs previously established by authorizing legislation. There are 12 annual appropriations bills, which must be passed by the start of each fiscal year. Failure to pass appropriations results in the need for Congress to pass a temporary funding measure to avert a shutdown of government operations.

**Authorization** — Legislation that establishes and authorizes funding for a federal program or agency. It specifies the program’s general purpose, how that purpose is to be achieved, and sets a funding ceiling for the program.

**Bill** — A proposed law. All formally introduced bills are assigned a number and denoted “H.R.” if they originate in the House and “S.” if they originate in the Senate.

**Caucus** — An informal group of Members of the House, Senate, or both formed around a shared interest in a specific policy issue.

**Chair** — Member of the majority party—often the most senior Member—who presides over the work of a committee or subcommittee.

**Committee** — A subgroup of Members assigned the responsibility to hold hearings and consider legislation within their jurisdiction.

**Committee Report** — A committee’s written statement about a given piece of legislation. It

includes recommendations for enforcement and implementation.

**Conference Committee** — An ad hoc committee consisting of Members from both chambers tasked with reconciling differences in legislation that has been passed by both chambers.

**Congressional Record** —The daily transcript of debate and proceedings in Congress.

**Continuing Resolution** — A joint resolution that appropriates money to fund agencies (often at the level of the previous fiscal year) whose funding bill has not yet been passed at the start of the new fiscal year.

**Discretionary Spending** — Spending controlled by the appropriations process. It is “discretionary” because Congress is not required to fund these programs.

**Filibuster** — A procedural tactic in the Senate whereby a Senator refuses to relinquish the floor in an attempt to delay or prevent a vote.

**Fiscal Year** — The accounting year for the federal government, spanning October 1 through September 30.

**Hearing** — Committee or subcommittee meetings, generally open to the public, to hear testimony by expert witnesses on a topic related to current or upcoming legislation or to conduct oversight or review of a federal agency or program.

**Hold** — An informal practice by which a senator informs his or her floor leader that he or she does not wish a particular bill or other measure to reach the floor for consideration.

**Joint Committee** — A committee consisting of members of both the House and Senate.

**Majority Leader** — Leader of the majority party in each chamber, elected by Members of the majority.

**Mandatory Spending** — Spending controlled by laws other than annual appropriations acts (e.g., Social Security and Medicare). These funds are obligated automatically by virtue of previously enacted laws.

**Markup** — The process by which committees and subcommittees debate, amend, and rewrite proposed legislation, usually ending with a vote to send the finalized legislation to the floor for a final vote.

**Minority Leader** — Leader of the minority party in each chamber, elected by members of the minority.

**Motion** — A formal proposal for procedural action.

**Omnibus Bill** — Legislation that packages two or more bills into one. Often used to pass several appropriations bills with one vote.

**Override** — The process by which Congress may pass a law in spite of a veto of the President. Overriding a veto requires a two-thirds vote from each chamber.

**Oversight** — Committee review of the activities of a federal agency or program.

**Quorum** — The number of Members whose presence is required to conduct business.

**Ranking Member** — Senior Member of the minority on a committee or subcommittee.

**Recess** — A temporary break in Congressional business.

**Rider** — An informal term to describe an amendment to a bill that has little connection with the subject matter of the bill.

**Sponsor** — The Member of Congress who introduces a bill. Other Members may show support by becoming “cosponsors.”

**Subcommittee** — A subset of a larger committee assigned with reviewing particular bills and issues and making recommendations to the full committee.

**Veto** — The procedure by which the President refuses to sign a bill, thus preventing it from being made into law. It may be overridden by a two-thirds majority of both the Senate and House.

**Whip** — The second-in-command to the majority or minority leader, responsible for marshalling the party’s support for legislation (“whipping votes”).

## Acronyms & Abbreviations

<b>ACS</b>	American Community Survey	<b>Labor-H</b>	Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee/Bill
<b>AHRQ</b>	Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality	<b>LC</b>	Legislative Correspondent
<b>BEA</b>	Bureau of Economic Analysis	<b>LD</b>	Legislative Director
<b>BLS</b>	Bureau of Labor Statistics	<b>LHOB</b>	Longworth House Office Building
<b>CBO</b>	Congressional Budget Office	<b>NIH</b>	National Institutes of Health
<b>CDC</b>	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	<b>NSF</b>	National Science Foundation
<b>CHOB</b>	Cannon House Office Building	<b>OBSSR</b>	National Institutes of Health Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research
<b>CJS</b>	Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee/Bill	<b>OMB</b>	White House Office of Management and Budget
<b>CR</b>	Continuing Resolution	<b>OSTP</b>	White House Office of Science and Technology Policy
<b>DOD</b>	Department of Defense	<b>R&amp;D</b>	Research & Development
<b>DOJ</b>	Department of Justice	<b>RHOB</b>	Rayburn House Office Building
<b>DOL</b>	Department of Labor	<b>SBE</b>	National Science Foundation Directorate for Social, Behavioral, & Economic Science
<b>FY</b>	Fiscal Year	<b>SBS</b>	Social and Behavioral Science
<b>GAO</b>	Government Accountability Office	<b>SD</b>	Dirksen Senate Office Building
<b>HELP</b>	Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions	<b>SH</b>	Hart Senate Office Building
<b>HHS</b>	Department of Health and Human Services	<b>SR</b>	Russell Senate Office Building
<b>IC</b>	National Institutes of Health Institutes & Centers	<b>USDA</b>	U.S. Department of Agriculture
<b>LA</b>	Legislative Aide/Assistant		

# Getting around Capitol Hill

## Map of the Capitol Complex



U.S. CAPITOL  
*Visitor Center*  
[www.visitthecapitol.gov](http://www.visitthecapitol.gov)

## Security

All visitors to Congressional office buildings must go through security. Plan ahead and leave extra time for this as there can be a wait—particularly during the morning rush (8:30-10:00 a.m.) and lunchtime (11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.).

You will be asked to pass any items you have brought with you through an X-ray machine and walk through a metal detector. You will not have to take off your shoes, but you should take off your coat and empty your pockets.

The following items are prohibited:

- Aerosol containers
- Non-aerosol spray (prescriptions for medical needs are permitted)
- Any pointed object, e.g. knitting needles and letter openers (pens and pencils are permitted)
- Any bag larger than 18" wide x 14" high x 8.5" deep
- Electric stun guns, martial arts weapons or devices
- Guns, replica guns, ammunition, and fireworks
- Knives of any size
- Mace and pepper spray
- Razors and box cutters
- Gift-wrapped items

## House Office Buildings

Members of the House of Representatives have offices in one of three buildings located on the south side of the Capitol. The buildings are connected by a tunnel that runs through the basement level. If you need a quick caffeine boost or a place to sit between meetings, the buildings have coffee shops and cafeterias on the lower levels. The closest Metro stop is Capitol South on the blue, orange, and silver lines.



### **Cannon House Office Building**

27 Independence Ave, SE

- Bounded by Independence Ave, SE (north), First St, SE (east), C St, SE (south), and New Jersey Ave, SE (west).
- Main entrance: Corner of Independence Ave and New Jersey Ave



### **Longworth House Office Building**

9 Independence Ave, SE

- Bounded by Independence Ave, SE (north), New Jersey Ave, SE (east), C St, SE (south), and South Capitol St, SE (west).
- Main entrance: Independence Ave



### **Rayburn House Office Building**

45 Independence Ave, SW

- Bounded by Independence Ave, SE (north), South Capitol St, SE (east), C St, SE (south), and First St, SW (west).
- Main entrance: Independence Ave

## Senate Office Buildings

Senators' offices are located in three buildings on the northeast side of the Capitol. The Russell and Dirksen Buildings are connected by a tunnel on the basement level. Dirksen and Hart are connected by stairways on each level. Food and coffee shops are located in the basement of Russell and Dirksen and on the ground floor connecting corridor between Dirksen and Hart. The closest Metro stop is Union Station on the red line.



### Russell Senate Office Building

2 Constitution Ave, NE

- Bounded by C St, NE (north), First St, NE (east), Constitution Ave, NE (south), and Delaware Ave, NE (west).
- Main entrance: Corner of Delaware Ave and Constitution Ave



### Dirksen Senate Office Building

100 Constitution Ave, NE

- Adjoins the Hart building on the east side. Bounded by C St, NE (north), Constitution Ave, NE (south), and First St, NE (west).
- Main entrance: Corner of First St and C St



### Hart Senate Office Building

150 Constitution Ave, NE

- Adjoins the Dirksen building on the west side. Bounded by C St, NE (north), 2<sup>nd</sup> St, NE (east), and Constitution Ave, NE (south).
- Main entrance: 2<sup>nd</sup> St, NE