

TheCapitol.Net's
Capitol Hill Workshop

Sample Agenda – see www.CapitolHillWorkshop.com for schedule.
Washington, DC

Day One: Location: Capitol Hill

8:30 Welcome and Introductions
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8:35 The Dynamics of Congress *CD Chapter 1*
Congressional expert

An expert on Congress will discuss the dynamics of the legislative process and the three key elements that drive today's institution: politics, policy and procedure. He will review differences between the House and Senate, and how the 107th Congress functions and makes policy with slim party majorities in a post-September 11 environment. He will also discuss how the upcoming elections impact policy making on the Hill.

9:40 Break

9:50 Today's Legislative Process *CD Chapter 8*
Congressional expert

The speaker will briefly review how a bill becomes a law by tracking legislation from introduction and referral to committee, through committee hearings and markups, floor consideration, to final passage and presidential action.

11:00 Break

11:10 The Work of Personal and Committee Staff *CD Chapter 5*
Congressional staff

A panel of congressional staff members will discuss the work environment on the Hill including the positions and responsibilities of committee and personal staff, and the organization of congressional offices. They will focus on what staffers need or expect from outside interests, and how these interests can build strong working relationships with staffers and the Hill. The staffers will also provide their insider insights into the dynamics in the 107th Congress and how things have changed since September 11 and the discovery of anthrax in congressional mail.

12:15 Lunch at (location on Capitol Hill)

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Day One: (continued)
Location: Capitol Hill

1:20 Politics and Leadership in the 107th Congress

CD Chapter 7

Congressional expert

The speaker will discuss the formal and informal leadership structures in the House and Senate as well as the politics and personalities of the major players in Congress. He will look at what to expect in the remainder of the second session of the 107th in terms of leadership, policy-making, and November congressional elections.

2:30 Break

2:45 Congressional Committees and the Hearing Environment *CD Chapters 7, 8*

Congressional expert

The speaker will set the context for the hearing that the attendees will view on Day Two by briefly reviewing the role of committees and the hearing process in the work of Congress. She will review the types of committees; the work of subcommittees; types of committee hearings (exploratory, legislative, investigative, oversight); committee markup of legislation; and committee reports. This session will also examine the role of the committee chairman in hearings; the role that committee staff play in deciding the subject matter of hearings, selecting witnesses and preparing questions for committee members to ask witnesses.

3:45 Instructions for Day Two

4:00 Day One concludes

*** We recommend that attendees bring their program folders and Congressional Deskbook to the Workshop each day.*

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Day Two: Location: Capitol Hill

8:30 Meet at (location on Capitol Hill distributed at program)

View Congressional Hearing: *TBD*

12:00 Lunch at (location on Capitol Hill)

1:15 Discussion of Congressional Hearings

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Participants will have an opportunity to discuss the hearings they attended in the morning.

1:30 Washington Lobbying: Communicating Effectively with Congress *CD Chapters 4, 10*
Congressional expert

This session will provide an overview of the current political environment on Capitol Hill and the role of lobbying in today's legislative process. Discussion will focus on how outside interests, including executive agencies, can communicate effectively with members of Congress and staff and build positive working relationships. The speaker will provide practical suggestions for accomplishing this, as well as provide important "do's" and "don'ts" of interacting with Congress since September 11 and the discovery of anthrax in congressional mail.

2:30 Break

2:45 How the Media Covers the White House, Capitol Hill and the Big Beats *CD Chapter 3*
DC reporter or editor

A well-known reporter will discuss who comprises the Washington press corps, and how they cover the big beats in D.C. Questions to be addressed include: how forthcoming are these institutions with information, and what role does the media play in shaping policy debate and decisions in these institutions.

4:00 Day Two concludes

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Day Three: Location: Capitol Hill

8:30 Introduction

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8:35 Elements of Decision Making in Washington

CD Chapters 3, 4

Congressional expert

The many forces that influence policy development and decision making in Washington, D.C. will be discussed in a macro and micro sense. Discussion will include the role of the electorate, and Congress' interactions with the White House, executive agencies, the media, and other political players.

9:45 Break

10:00 Congressional Budgeting Today

CD Chapter 9

Congressional expert

This session will introduce the congressional budget process, the major players, procedures, and timing of decisions, as well as the politics of federal surpluses and deficits. Authorizations, appropriations and reconciliation will be reviewed, and participants will see the "big picture" of federal budgeting.

(A short break will be taken at approximately 11:00 a.m.)

12:00 Lunch at (location on Capitol Hill)

1:00 Return to conference room at Capitol Hill Club

1:15 A Member's Perspective on Politics and Policy

CD Chapters 2, 3, 4

Former Member of Congress

A former member of Congress will analyze the many pressures and responsibilities that a member must balance in day-to-day decision-making and policy-making. Discussion will include how members must deal with large amounts of incoming mail; handle fund-raising and press operations; advance legislative and political agenda; get re-elected, and more.

2:30 Break

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Day Three: (continued)
Location: Capitol Hill

2:40 Presidential-Congressional Relations

CD Chapter 10

Congressional expert

The speaker will examine the current working relationship between Congress and the Bush White House. He will review how the balance of power between the executive and legislative branches has shifted over time, and where it is today.

3:45 Complete Evaluations

4:00 Program Concludes

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CD = Chapter references to relevant material in the Congressional Deskbook, which is included in the Workshop materials.

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