Annual Meeting Capitol Hill Day
FAQs

What should I wear?
- Business attire is preferred — suits...and comfortable shoes.
- A day of meetings on the Hill involves lots of walking from office to office and between office buildings.

Will there be snacks and lunch?
- The Hill Day schedule will provide time for you to grab a lunch, ranging from sandwiches, chips/sweets, and fruit to a more formal lunch.

Will I have breaks?
- Don’t count on it although it is possible.
- Representatives and Hill staff availability determine our schedule.
- If you have free time during the day or want a snack or drink, there are cafeterias, snack bars, and coffee shops in the House and Senate office buildings.
- Options and directions will be included in your orientation packet. Hill Day staff and U.S. Capitol Police officers can give you directions.

How much walking and stair climbing is required?
- You can avoid stairs but you’ll walk quite a bit.
- We try hard to limit the amount of walking you have to do.
- Invariably, however, you will have to walk from one floor to the next or wait for elevators in between office buildings for the House of Representatives and the Senate.
- The longest distance between buildings is about six blocks.
- You’ll rack up lots of steps on your Fitbit!

What will the weather be like?
- Washington, D.C., weather in December can range from the teens to the 40s,
sometimes in the same day.

- The best advice is to bring layers and watch the weather forecasts.

**Will I be on my own at meetings?**

- Probably not. In most cases, you will be with a small group of colleagues in each meeting.
- Usually, we try to make sure that an ASCB staff member is also at every meeting to lead the initial discussion and answer any detailed policy questions you might be asked.
- However, because of the large number of Hill Day participants we expect, we will try to at least ensure that a colleague with prior Hill Day experience is at each meeting.

**What should I do with my luggage?**

- You should leave your luggage with the concierge at your hotel.
- Security concerns in and around House and Senate office buildings make it impossible to store suitcases for the day and you should not bring your luggage around with you during the Hill Day.
- Carrying your luggage during the day adds to fatigue and discomfort.

**I haven’t voted recently, does that matter?**

- Voting is important but not a prerequisite to meet with elected Representatives.
- Members of Congress and Senators represent *all* citizens in their state or district, not just those who voted for them.
- You will not be asked about your voting history and should never offer it.

**Does it matter if I am a Republican or Democrat?**

- No, your party affiliation is not germane.
- Your party affiliation does not need to match that of your Members of Congress and/or Senators.
- Members of Congress and Senators represent all the citizens in their state or district.
- You will not be asked about your party affiliation and should never offer it.

**Will the staff or Representative I meet understand my area of research?**

- No, certainly not at the level you discuss with your colleagues.
- You might meet with a physician or scientist serving in Congress or, more likely with Congressional staff.
- You will be discussing your work in general, not specific terms.
- Explain your research and its potential implications for public health in layperson’s terms. It helps those on the Hill understand the importance of federal funding and the relevance of basic biomedical research.

**What is Capitol Hill security like?**

- In general, security on Capitol Hill is much like airport security.
- Before entering any House or Senate office building, visitors pass through metal detectors and belongings are screened by X-ray machines.
- Be prepared to empty your pockets and put your belongings though the X-ray
machines. You can keep your shoes on, however.

- **You should bring some form of government issued ID (driver’s license, passport) with you as entrance to some areas of the Capitol require identification.**
- In general, if you can’t bring it on a plane, you can’t bring it in an office building. Security can change in response to national and international events or dignitaries visiting the Hill.

**How will I know what to say?**

- Capitol Hill Days also begin with a briefing about key messages.
- We will review the briefing materials, including individual information about the particular offices you will be meeting with.
- The briefings also try to help you refine your 2 minute speech, the way you explain your research.
- You should plan on participating in the Advocacy Toolbox I session during the meeting to help you improve your 2 minute speech.

**Will I meet with my Representative/Senators?**

- Senators and Members of Congress try to meet with as many of their constituents as their schedules allow.
- Unfortunately, Senators’ and Representatives’ schedules often require them to be at several places at the same time, including in committee hearings and voting on bills.
- Some offer photo opportunities and/or drop in on staff meetings.
- Congressional staff members play critical roles in the public policy decision-making process and Representatives/Senators know that.
- Meeting staff is very worthwhile and offers excellent opportunities to build beneficial, long-term relationships.

**What should I do if I get lost?**

- Don’t worry!
- We’ll give you maps, directions, and cell phone numbers for ASCB staff.
- Washingtonians are friendly — just ask for help if needed.
- Your best source of information and directions are the members of the U.S. Capitol Police.
- The officers are at every entrance and on patrol in the buildings and around the Capitol grounds.
- They give directions all the time and are friendly and helpful.

**How long will it take to get to the airports?**

- Travel time to the Washington, D.C., area airports—Reagan National Airport (DCA), Dulles International Airport (IAD), and Baltimore Washington International Airport (BWI)— it depends a great deal on the time of day you leave and which hotel you are leaving from.
- Precise travel time to the three DC area airports Reagan National Airport is
five miles from Capitol Hill but if you leave during rush hour (after 3:30 pm), it could mean a 20-minute trip.

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