

2022 Children's Mental Health Advocacy Conference

Using Grassroots Advocacy to
Eliminate Exclusionary and Punitive
Disciplinary Policies in Schools

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Our Goal: Pass Key Legislation

- *Ending PUSHOUT Act* (H.R.2248)
- *Counseling Not Criminalization Act*
(H.R.4011/S.2125)
- *Stop Institutional Child Abuse Act*

The Legislative Process Basics

Introduction
& Referral

Committee
Review

Committee
Action

Floor Debate
& Vote

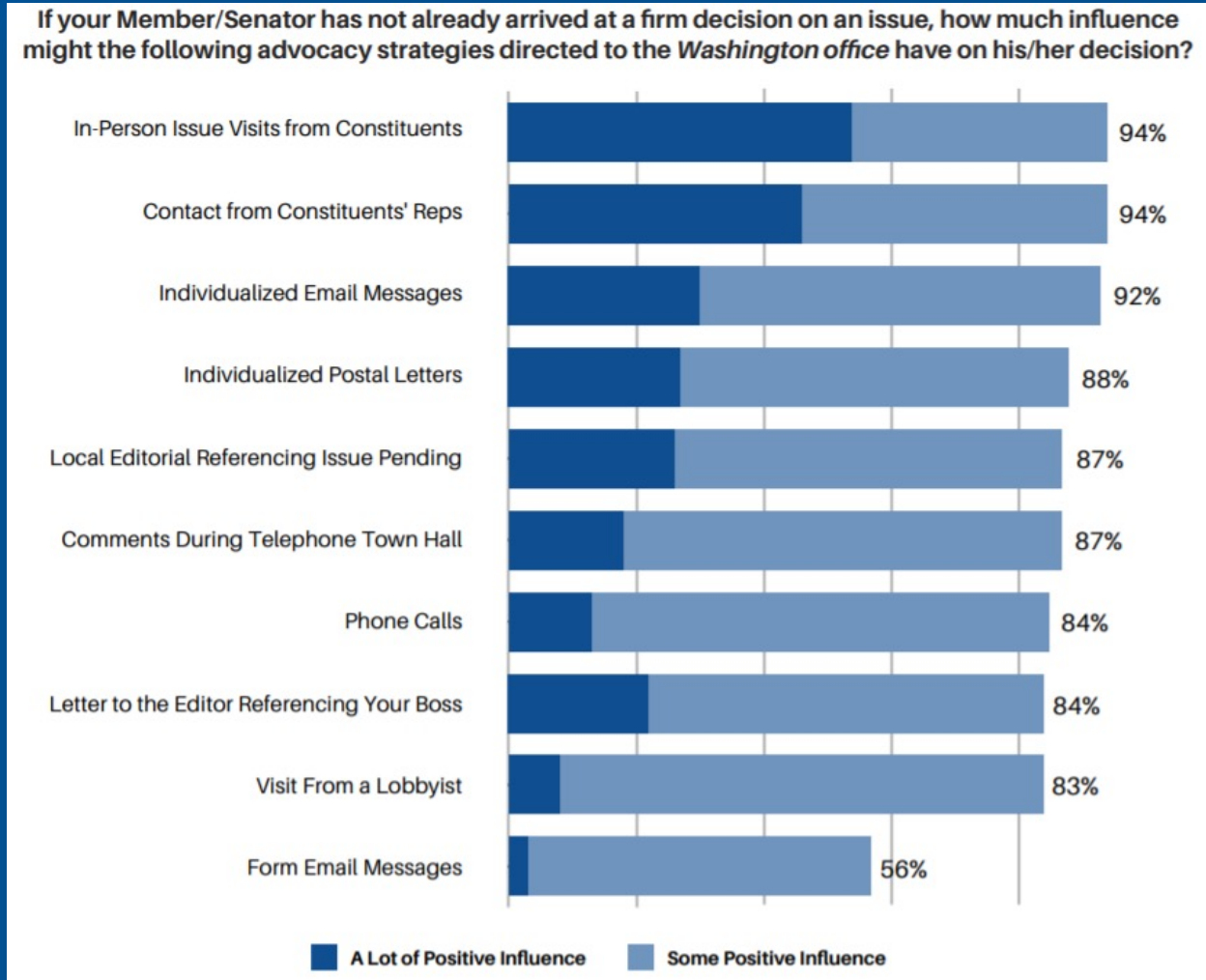
Presidential
Approval



Influences Impacting Policymakers



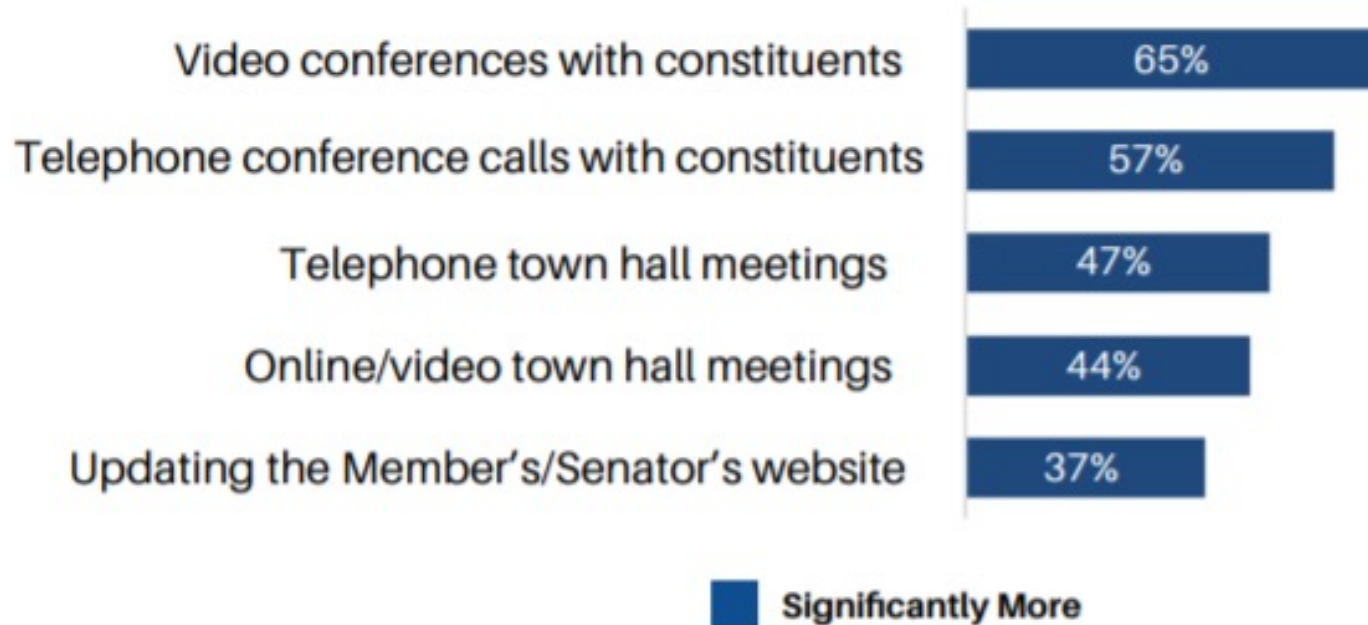
Value of Grassroots Advocacy



Source: Congressional Management Foundation

Grassroots Advocacy During COVID-19

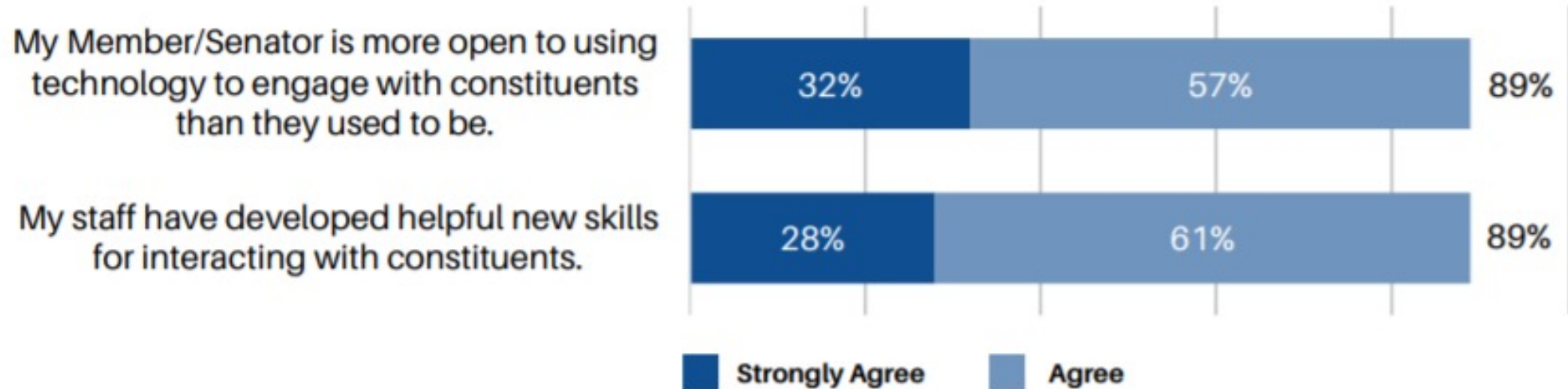
Compared to the months prior to the COVID-19 crisis, has your Senator/Representative done more of, less of, or about the same number of the following activities in the past two months?



Source: Congressional Management Foundation

Grassroots Advocacy During COVID-19

In thinking about how the COVID-19 crisis has affected your interactions with constituents, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

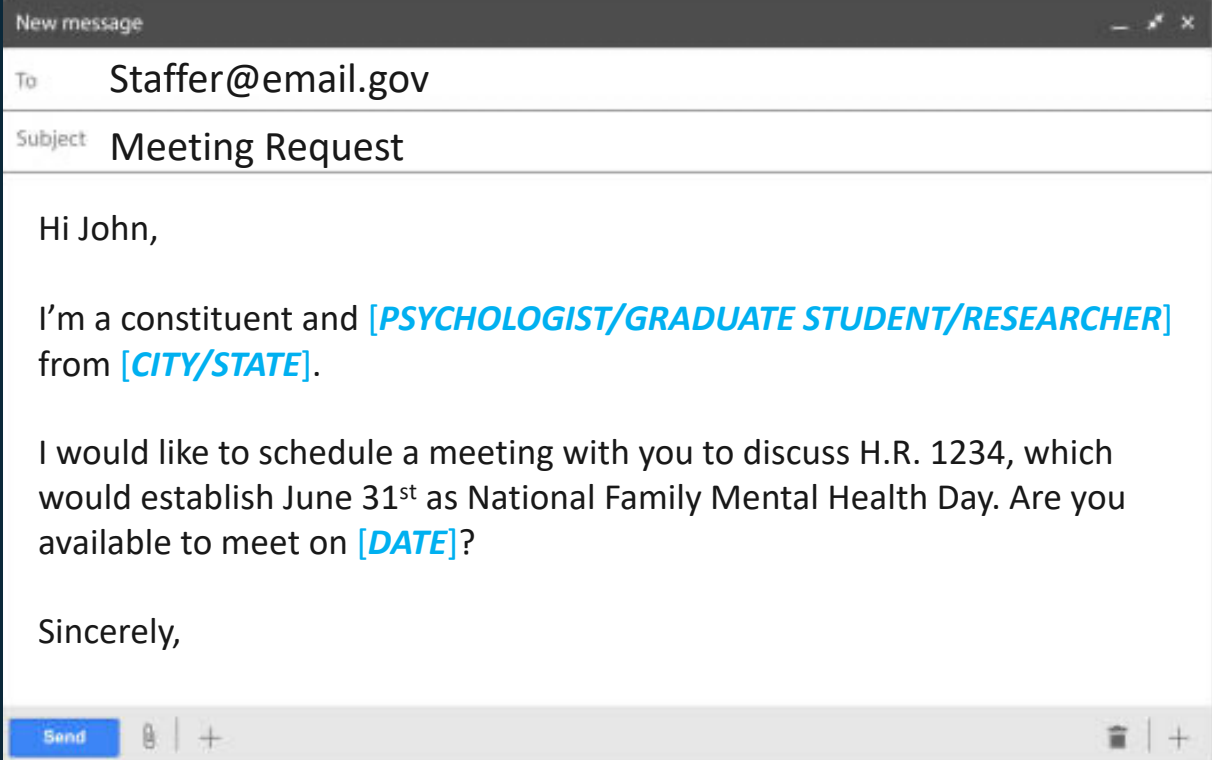


Source: Congressional Management Foundation

How to Request a Meeting

- Meetings can be scheduled in D.C. or your District.
- Phone numbers for D.C. and District Offices are listed on your Member's website.
- To request a meeting with a **Staffer**:
 - Call the office, ask for the contact information for the Staffer who covers the issue area you want to discuss (e.g. health, education).
- To request a meeting with your **Member**:
 - Look up the current Congressional Calendar
 - Call the office, ask for the contact information for the Member's Scheduler.
- Follow up with a brief meeting request to the individual.

Sample Meeting Request to Staffer (Email)



New message

To: Staffer@email.gov

Subject: Meeting Request

Hi John,

I'm a constituent and **[PSYCHOLOGIST/GRADUATE STUDENT/RESEARCHER]** from **[CITY/STATE]**.

I would like to schedule a meeting with you to discuss H.R. 1234, which would establish June 31st as National Family Mental Health Day. Are you available to meet on **[DATE]**?

Sincerely,

Send

Emailing Your Member of Congress

EMAIL ME

* marks required fields of data.

Your Information

Prefix: *

- Select -

First Name: *

MI:

Last Name: *

Suffix:

- None -

Your Contact Information

Street Address: *

Street Address Continued:

City: *

State: *

DC

Zip Code: *

Preparing for Your Meeting:

Overview of Meeting with Legislative Staff

- 1. Background Research**
- 2. Start to Build Rapport**
- 3. Lay the Groundwork for the Meeting**
- 4. Share Relevant Data**
- 5. Present the Issue**
- 6. Connect it to Your Legislator's Priorities**
- 7. Present the Solution: Your Legislative Requests**
- 8. Express Your Appreciation for the Visit**

Preparing for Your Meeting: Background Research



Legislation Sponsored or Cosponsored by Eleanor Holmes Norton

Hide Filters

Hide Tracker

1-100 of 13,525

100 per page



1

of 136



Sort by

Number - Descending

Sponsorship

Sponsored Legislation

[815]

Cosponsored Legislation

[12,710]

Congress

Check all

☐ 117 (2021-2022)

[945]

☐ 116 (2019-2020)

[2,220]

Show more

Bill Type

Status of Legislation

Status of Amendment

Subject — Policy Area

BILL

1. [H.R.4332](#) — 117th Congress (2021-2022)

To address and take action to prevent bullying and harassment of students.

Sponsor: [Rep. Sanchez, Linda T. \[D-CA-38\]](#) (Introduced 07/01/2021) Cosponsors: (42)

Committees: House - Education and Labor

Latest Action: House - 07/01/2021 Referred to the House Committee on Education and Labor. ([All Actions](#))

Tracker: [Introduced](#) [Passed House](#) [Passed Senate](#) [To President](#) [Became Law](#)

BILL

2. [H.R.4324](#) — 117th Congress (2021-2022)

To help train individuals in effective and evidence-based de-escalation techniques to ensure that individuals at diverse levels and retain greater skills to resolve conflicts, manage anger, and control implicit bias without the use of physical or other force for purposes.

Sponsor: [Rep. Moore, Gwen \[D-WI-4\]](#) (Introduced 07/01/2021) Cosponsors: (11)

Committees: House - Education and Labor; Energy and Commerce

Latest Action: House - 07/01/2021 Referred to the Committee on Education and Labor, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee. ([All Actions](#))

Tracker: [Introduced](#) [Passed House](#) [Passed Senate](#) [To President](#) [Became Law](#)

Importance of Congressional Staff

Members of Congress are the ones who are elected, but often their staff wield a great deal of power and authority.



- They are gatekeepers.
- They are decision-makers.
- They are trusted advisors.
- They are policy experts.

Preparing for Your Meeting: *The Conversation*

Based on the research you did, are there any mutual interests you might want to spend a few moments talking about?

Preparing for Your Meeting: *The Conversation*

You are here to discuss legislation to eliminate exclusionary and punitive disciplinary policies in schools.

- *Describe the issue.*
- *Explain why it's important and want experiences or expertise you have that is relevant.*

Preparing for Your Meeting: The Conversation

Back it up with evidence, both empirical and anecdotal

- *Share relevant data.*
- *Identify the problem, using anecdotes where applicable.*
- *Make the issue as relevant and local as possible.*
- *Connect the issue to your legislator's priorities.*

Preparing for Your Meeting: *Make it Personal*

Why is this issue important to you, and why should it be important to your Member of Congress?



Do you work with children who have experienced exclusionary disciplinary practices?

Do you have friends, colleagues, or family members whose children have been exposed to such practices?

Do you have examples of how this is impacting vulnerable populations?

Storytelling Steps for Advocacy

- ❖ Include specifics and details.
- ❖ Humanize the issue.
- ❖ Describe how proposed changes may impact real people.
- ❖ If possible, keep it local.
- ❖ Practice your story out loud.

Preparing for Your Meeting: *The Conversation*

Do not forget “the ask!”

➤ *Present your legislative request as the solution.*

After Your Meeting

- **Write a thank you letter/email**
 - *Reinforce the messages you delivered.*
 - *Thank them for their work.*
 - *Connect to resources.*
- **Continue contact with Congressional Office**
 - *Send updates & follow-ups.*
 - *Request future meetings in-district.*
 - *Engage with them on social media.*
- **Encourage colleagues to become involved**



Remember: It's a Marathon, Not a Sprint!

