

# Communicating with Congress

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# Why Work with Congress

- Your research intersects with the public and policy decisions
- Majority of academic research is publicly funded
- Fulfill “broader impacts” or other outreach requirements of funding
- Brings personal meaning to work

# Science for Policy

- Hazards
- Climate change
- Mineral development
- Energy
- Water resources

# Policy for Science

- Science funding
- Security policy (visa, labs access)
- Open access
- Travel policy
- Science funding

# What is your role?

- Honest broker
- Advocate
- “I think that, as scientists, we have the ability and the right, if not the obligation, to speak as concerned and informed citizens. But it is useful to keep those roles separate. We have no particular priestly role where we have greater weight than anyone else.”
  - Ken Caldeira



# WORKING WITH CONGRESS

A SCIENTIST'S GUIDE TO POLICY

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 AAAS  
ADVANCING SCIENCE. SERVING SOCIETY

# Top 10 Rules

1. **Know Your Goal**
2. **Understand How Congress Works and Makes Decisions**
3. **Conduct Detailed Background Research**
4. **Use Your Knowledge of the Legislative Process to Determine the Timing of Your Course of Action**
5. **Understand Congressional Staff and Their Influence**

# Legislative Branch

## Bicameral

*House of Representatives*

435 Representatives (2 year term)

*Senate*

100 Senators (6 year term)

## Procedural Differences

## Duality

*Lawmaking and Representation*

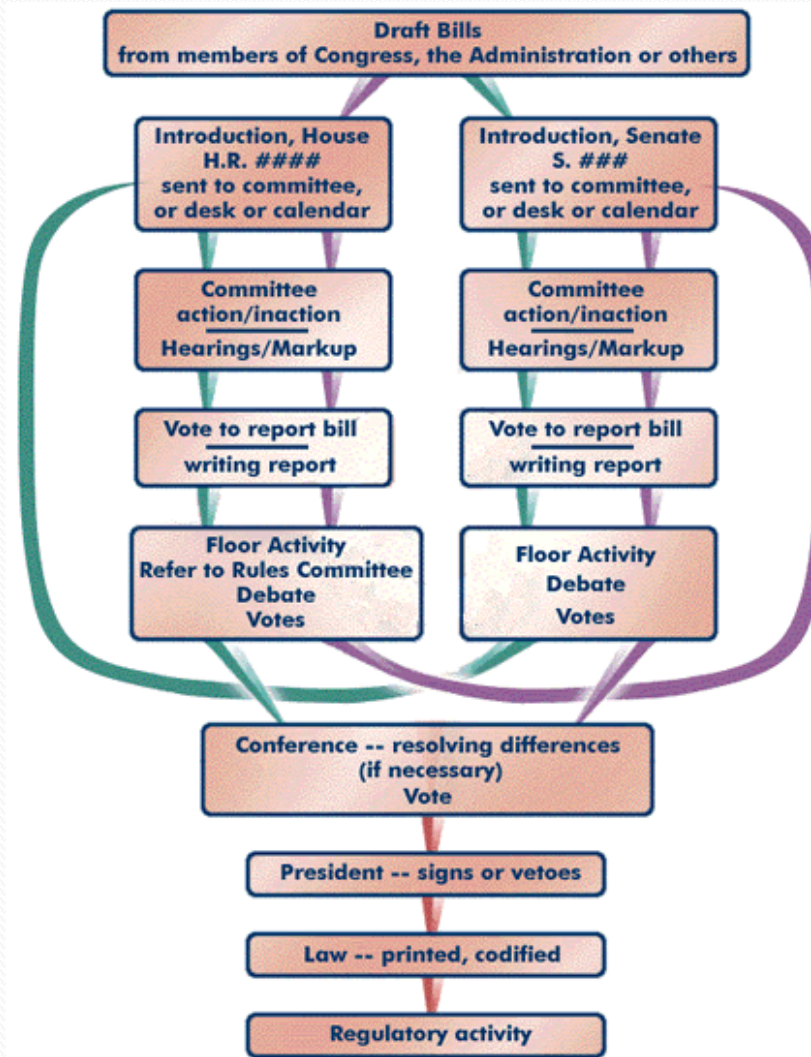




# Representation and Lawmaking

- Constituent Service
  - Service Academies
  - Flag requests
  - Help with government programs (passports, Medicare)
  - Respond to constituents concerns
    - Legislative Correspondent

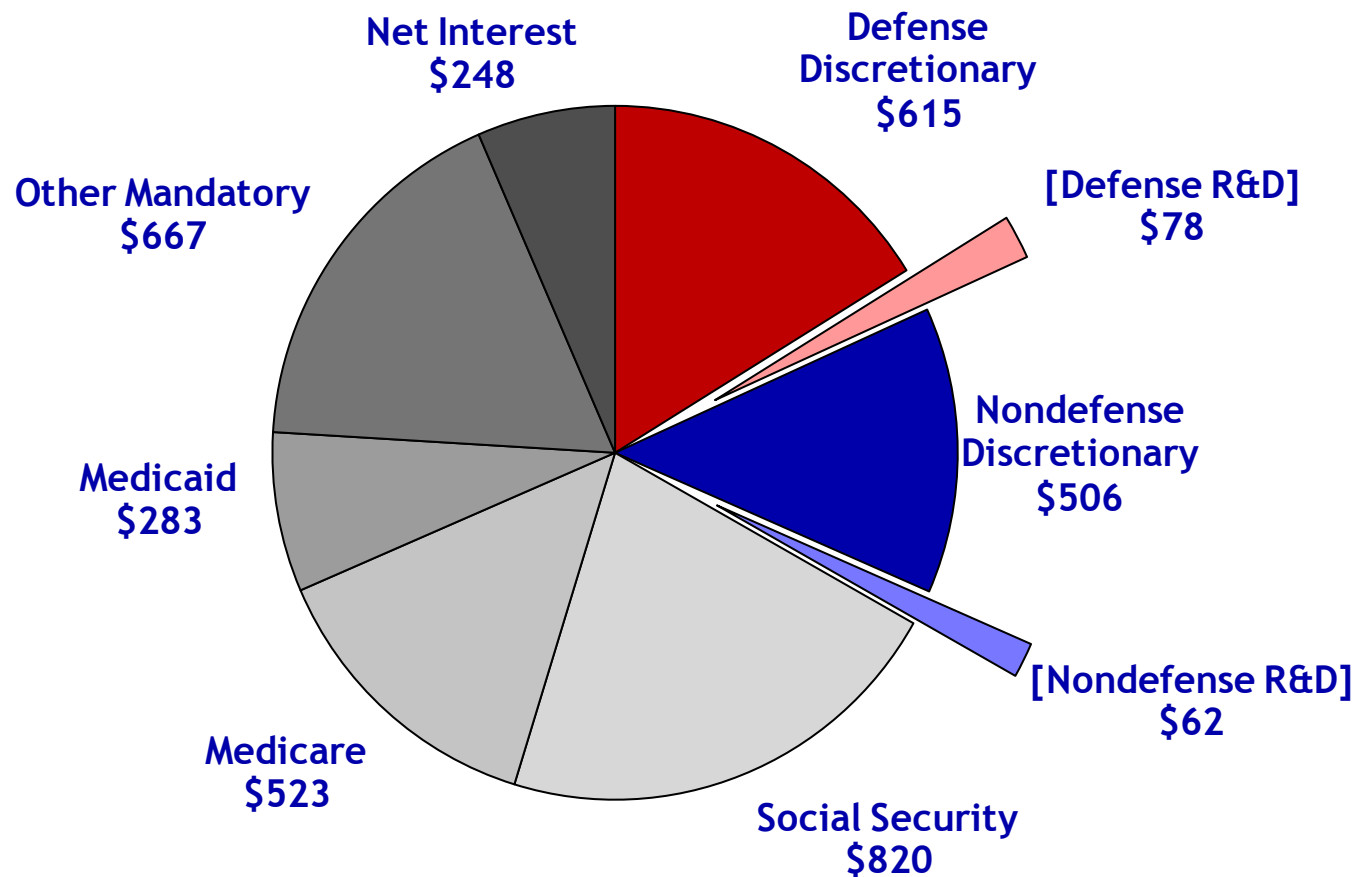
# How a Bill Becomes A Law



# Composition of the Proposed FY 2013 Budget

## Total Outlays = \$3.8 trillion

outlays in billions of dollars



Source: *Budget of the United States Government FY 2013.*

Projected unified deficit is \$901 billion.

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# Sequestration and Science

- 8.7 billion cut to the FY 2013 defense and nondefense R&D budget (AAAS)
- NSF memo: Prioritize existing grants and contracts; NSF workforce, STEM future
- 1,000 fewer grants, 12,000 people
- DOI Memo: discontinue 350-375 stream gages
- USGS Travel Suspended Through April
- According to OMB, USGS furloughs, reductions in grants, less R&D
- EPA, OMB furloughs

## Bearing the Information Load

- 200 inbound e-mails from advocacy groups, constituents, and colleagues
- 25 e-mail alerts
- 5 news websites
- 150 headlines
- 15 Internet searches
- 5 Washington-focused publications
- 4 newspapers
- 3 news magazines
- 8 hours of (background) cable news
- 3 hours of radio news
- 5 online newsletters
- 5 Congressional Research Service reports
- 2 hours of committee hearings
- 300 pages of documents from leadership's office
- 75-page report from Congressional budget office
- 25 faxes from interest groups
- 20 publications, position papers, fact packs received by mail
- 30 phone calls
- 4 lobbyist meetings







# Home District Visits

- [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)
- [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)
  - Identify Member
  - Contact information for district office

# Home District Visits

- [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)
- [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)
- Members using twitter
- Apps
- Facebook





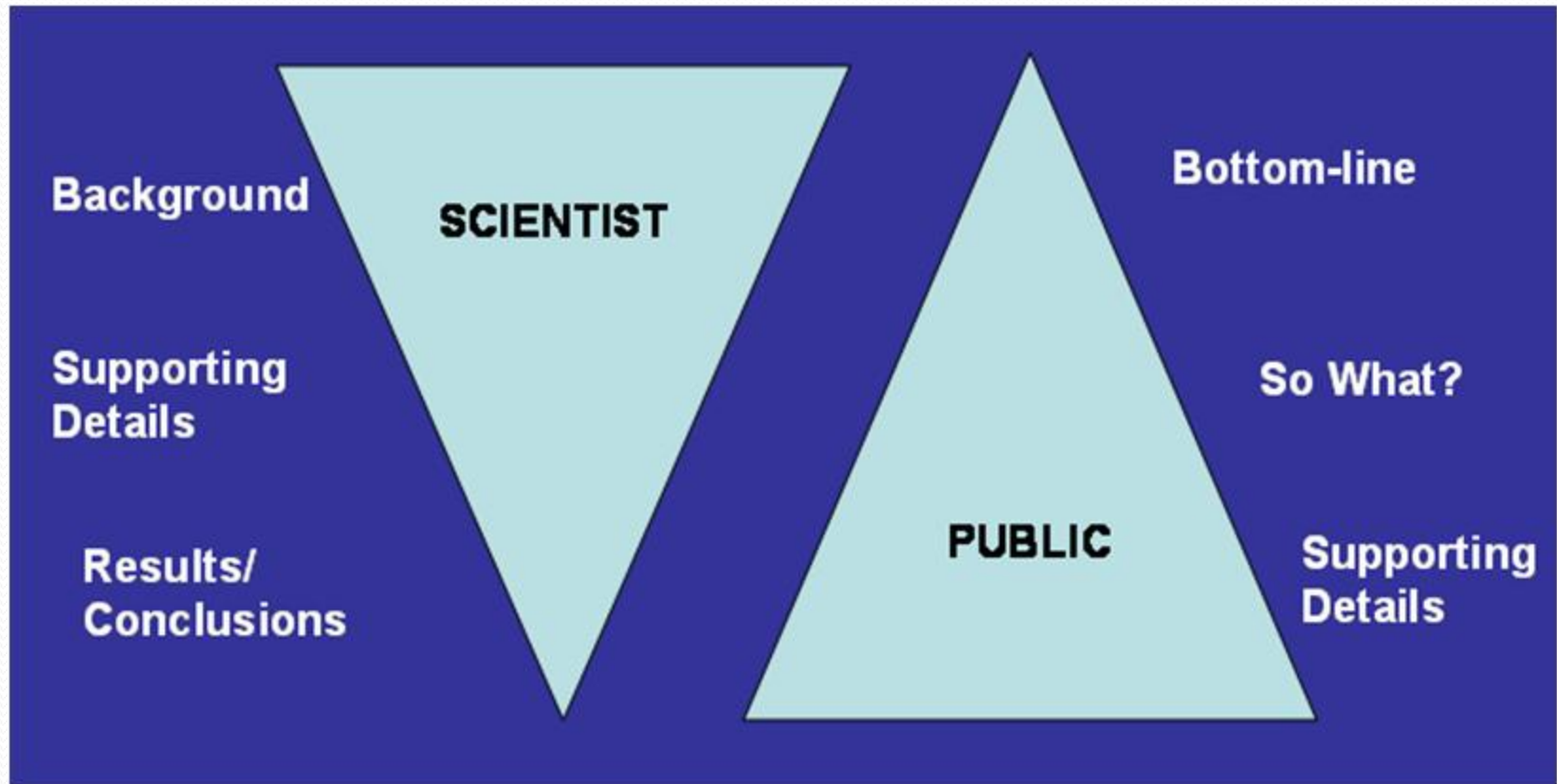
# Webcasts



# Top 10: In the Meeting

6. Be clear and succinct
7. Provide Concrete Suggestions
8. Present Science as a Means to Meet National Goals, Not an Entitlement
9. Be Willing to Say “I Don’t Know”
10. Follow Up Appropriately

# Different Communication Styles



# Letters

- Congressional websites have forms or reach out to contacts
- Send to DC office staff; Local staff can be helpful in identifying right person
- Single topic
- 1 page

# Letters

The Honorable Jennifer Smith  
United States Senate  
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Smith:

- Reason for writing, your information
- Importance of issue
- Restate Request

# Phone Calls

Capitol Switchboard 202.224.3121

Best for quick messages, ie vote yes or no

# Follow up

- Thank staff for time
- Check in every few months
- Build relationship
- Thank Member when he votes the way you have asked
- Invite to tour local facilities

# Resources

- GSA Position Statements
  - <http://www.geosociety.org/positions/>
- AAAS Communicating Science
  - <http://communicatingscience.aaas.org/>
- AGI Government Affairs
  - <http://www.agiweb.org/gap/resources/communicate.html>