**PROGRAPROGRAM **

**Welcome from your NIB Public Policy Team**

*A Guide to Becoming Your Best Advocate*

The goal of NIB’s Public Policy team is to ensure that every Member of Congress (Member) understands the employment problems facing the blind community and the amazing work being done by our associated agencies (YOU) to enhance the social and economic independence of persons who are blind. Recognizing the valuable work each member of our community undertakes, there is no one better suited to be advocates for this mission than YOU. Therefore, the purpose of this advocacy Tool Kit is to provide a framework to help you become your strongest advocate for our shared mission.

Advocacy can be defined as influencing or supporting a cause, idea or policy. Reduced to its most basic level, effective policy advocacy is about communication and relationships. Developing relationships *before* an issue arises is the key to being influential in the public policy process. Action usually comes about slowly, so it’s important to be persuasive, persistent and patient. It is very much in your long-term interest to establish effective communications and positive relationships with your Members of Congress (Members). The partnerships you create now will help our community make gains in the future.

Remember that you know your agency and associates better than anyone else. We need your help in striving to educate and explain these issues to the people who ultimately determine public policy and will shape the future of the AbilityOne Program. When our message is universally understood, we will all be better equipped to fulfill our goals of creating, sustaining and improving employment for people who are blind.

In this Tool Kit, we have outlined a guide for successful advocacy and included several sample materials for your use. An awareness campaign, such as this one, works best with a grassroots approach. Using this kit, you can influence key audiences locally as we continue federal efforts in Washington, D.C. A partnership between NIB and our associated agencies is the most effective way to deliver our important message. Working together, we can create greater awareness of the valuable work we are all doing in support of people who are blind, and help make positive changes in policy where necessary.

If you have any questions about this Tool Kit or need assistance, please don’t hesitate to contact any member of the Public Policy team at NIB.

Sincerely,

Your NIB Public Policy Team

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***If you have any questions regarding how to use this toolkit, please contact:***

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**Steps to Initiate a Congressional Visit to Your Agency**

Step 1: Identify your Members of Congress. You should target at least three – your Representative in the House and your two Senators. You can identify your Representative by going to [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) and entering your 9-digit zip code. You can identify your Senators by going to <http://www.senate.gov> and selecting your state. Or call the NIB Public Policy team and we’ll be glad to help. If you have operations in more than one district, you should reach out to all relevant Members.

Step 2: Compose a letter to the Member **(see example attached).** Personalize it as much as possible (e.g., reference a visit to DC office). Mail the letter to the Member’s district office (if you need help with this, call someone from the NIB Public Policy team).

Step 3: Call and/or email appropriate staff person to invite the Member. If you know or have met a staffer in the office, reach out to that person first. Tell him/her that you would like to set up a time for the Member to visit your agency and that you have already sent a letter to the district office. Then ask for the name and contact information of the scheduler. If you don’t know anyone in the office, look up the office phone number in your Congressional directory or at the websites listed in Step 1 and call the main DC number. Tell the person who answers that you would like the contact information for the scheduler to inquire about a meeting/facility visit in the district. You will then either be connected to the district office or to the scheduler in the DC office, depending on how the office staff is structured. Each Congressional office is a little different.

Step 4: Contact the scheduler by phone or email depending on what is provided. If both are provided, do both. Call first **(see call script)** and follow up with an email **(see example attached).** In your email, make sure to copy the staffer that you originally reached out to and let the scheduler know that you sent a request letter to the district office. Propose several dates that would work for your agency but try to be as flexible as possible. During the district/state work period or on a Monday or Friday is usually the best time **(see legislative calendar).**

Step 5: Once you have settled on a date with the scheduler, announce it to your agency employees to generate excitement…but also caution that it is not unusual for a Member’s schedule to change and affect the visit. And don’t forget to notify NIB.

Step 6: If you plan to invite the press, please refer to the **draft media advisory**. Be sure to coordinate any media efforts with the Member’s press secretary.

Step 7: Plan your visit **(see how to plan a successful visit).** Make sure to follow up with the scheduler a few days before to confirm that the visit is still on as planned. Provide the scheduler an itinerary and list of attendees (agency leadership), as well as directions.

Step 8: Host the visit!

Step 9: Follow up with a thank you letter **(see sample thank you letter attached)** to the Member at his or her district office and thank you emails **(see sample thank you email attached)** to the scheduler and any staffer that you coordinated with or that attended the tour. Send the letter within three business days.

Step 10: Remain in contact. Send copies of newsletters, annual reports or articles about jobs created in the district. Also see page 14 for more ideas on how to continue your advocacy throughout the year.

**Sample Member Invite Letter**

(Put on your agency letterhead)

Date

The Honorable [Insert Member Name]

United States Representative (or Senator)

District Office Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Representative (or Senator) \_\_\_\_\_\_:

On behalf of **[Agency Name**], it is our pleasure to invite you to tour our facility at **[Address]** and meet with our employees.

As you may know, seven out of 10 working age Americans who are blind are not employed. **[Agency Name]** is one of the 90 associated agencies across the nation that provides people who are blind with employment, job training and rehabilitative services. We are proud of our **XXX** years of service in the blind and disabled community of **[Insert State].** Our purpose is to positively change people’s attitudes about blindness, while employing over **XXX** associates at our **XXX** different facilities.

On your tour, you will see first-hand the impact the AbilityOne Program has on the lives of our employees who are blind. Nationwide, more than 47,000 people who are blind or severely disabled provide services and products through the AbilityOne Program. Every AbilityOne purchase creates jobs and sustains the economic independence of people who are blind or severely disabled.

We look forward to hosting you and your staff at our facilities during an upcoming district/state work period. We know your presence will mean a lot to our employees. If you or your staff has any questions, please do not hesitate to contact **[Insert Appropriate Contact]**. Thank you for considering this invitation. We hope you can visit us soon.

Sincerely,

Name of CEO Kevin A. Lynch (If appropriate)

Title, Agency President and CEO, NIB

cc: Any appropriate personal office and/or committee staff member

**Sample Office Call Script**

Hello. My name is **XXX** and I’m calling from the **[Agency Name]** in **[City].** I would like to invite the Congressman/woman to visit our facility. Will you please put me in contact with your scheduler?

*If you are given an email address, see attached email script. If you are connected to the scheduler, introduce yourself again and proceed as follows:*

Our agency has submitted an official invitation letter to the district office and wanted to follow up with you. **[Again, add any relevant personal connections]**. I would be happy to provide you with a brief background on our organization if you like.

*If yes, then proceed as follows:*

Seven out of 10 working age Americans who are blind are not employed.  **[Agency Name]** is one of the 90 associated agencies across the nation that provides people who are blind with employment, job training and rehabilitative services. We have been serving the state of **XXX** for **XXX** years. Our purpose is to positively change people’s attitudes about blindness, while employing over **XXX** associates at our **XXX** different facilities.

On the tour, **[Insert Member’s name]** will see first-hand the impact the AbilityOne Program has on the lives of our employees who are blind. We would appreciate it if you can let us know a few days that might work with his/her schedule. I look forward to hearing back from you with those dates and please let me know if you have any questions in the meantime. *Leave your contact information.* Thank you for your time.

**Sample Email to Scheduler**

Dear **[Insert scheduler’s name]**

It is my pleasure to invite **[Insert Member’s name]** to tour **[Agency Name**] at **[Address]**. We have submitted an official letter to the district office and wanted to follow up with you. Please let me take the opportunity to provide you a brief background on our organization.

Seven out of 10 working age Americans who are blind are not employed.  **[Agency Name]** is one of the 90 associated agencies across the nation that provides people who are blind with employment, job training and rehabilitative services. We are proud of our **XXX** years of service in the blind and disabled community of **[Insert State]**. Our purpose is to positively change people’s attitudes about blindness, while employing over **XXX** associates at our **XXX** different facilities.

On the tour, **[Insert Member’s name]** will see first-hand the impact the AbilityOne Program has on the lives of our employees who are blind. We would appreciate if you can let us know a few days that might work with his/her schedule. I look forward to working with you and please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Name

Title, Agency

**How to Plan a Successful Visit**

***Do Your Research*** – Learn about the Member before he/she arrives. Find out his/her background and areas of interest. Also, know about his/her recent voting history and what legislation is important to him/her. Most of this information can be found on the Member’s website (go to [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) or [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) to learn more). You can find out if he/she is on a Committee that is relevant to our cause in the appendix of this document. The more informed you are and the more personal connections you can make, the more memorable you will be!

***Get Your Employees Excited*** – The Member will sense if the agency is excited to have him/her there. You should schedule time during the visit to have the Member speak to all of the employees. They love the opportunity to speak to their constituents.

***Communicate Your Message*** – 70% of working age people who are blind are not employed. Many federal agencies do not comply with AbilityOne Program requirements. These are facts they need to know. Also, tell them what is special about your agency and how you’re working to combat these challenges.

***Ask for Something* –** If the Member is not currently an AbilityOne Champion, ask him/her to become one. Go over the steps he/she must take with the Member and the staffer. Signing and sending a letter of support or making a statement in the Congressional Record is a great opportunity for the Member to show support of our community and take another step toward becoming a Champion. See page 18 for AbilityOne Champion criteria.

**Sample Media Advisory**



*PLACE YOUR LOGO HERE*

**MEDIA ADVISORY Contact:**

Name

Title

Agency Name

Phone

Email

**For Immediate Release**

DATE, XX, 2011

**Congressman [Smith] to Visit [Insert Name of Associated Agency]**

*Local nonprofit provides employment opportunities to people who are blind, while delivering high-quality products and services to federal and military customers*

[CITY, STATE]—[Name of agency] will host Congressman [Smith] for an open house and a tour of its [manufacturing] facilities. For more than [XX] years, [agency name] has provided meaningful employment and training opportunities for people who are blind in the [insert name of the town] community.

[Agency name] is one of 90 associated agencies of National Industries for the Blind (NIB), which produces SKILCRAFT® products and provides services for federal government customers through the AbilityOne Program. NIB and its associated agencies serve as the largest employer of people who are blind in the United States, employing more than 6,000 people who are blind.

**What:** [Name of agency] will host Congressman [Smith] for a tour of its [manufacturing facility and state-of-the-art service center]. The tour will provide a firsthand look at the employment and training opportunities available at [name of agency], and will showcase the diverse products and services it provides to federal and military customers across the country.

**Who:** [Using official titles, list the names of the members of Congress, public officials and/or senior leaders participating in the event.]

**When:** [Tuesday, April 7, 2011]

Tour will begin at [X:XX AM], followed by a media Q&A

**Where:** [Name of agency]   
[Full address and any specific instructions about where to enter]

**Media:** To register to attend this event, please contact [name] at [phone] or [email].

**About [Associated Agency]**

[Insert standard language used to describe the agency.]

**About National Industries for the Blind (NIB)**

At National Industries for the Blind (NIB), it is our mission to enhance the opportunities for economic and personal independence of persons who are blind, primarily through creating, sustaining and improving employment. NIB and its 90 associated nonprofit agencies serve as the largest employer for people who are blind by the sale of SKILCRAFT® products and services through the AbilityOne Program, established by the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act. [www.NIB.org](http://www.NIB.org).

**Sample Member Thank You Letter**

(Put on your agency letterhead)

April xx, 2011

Date

The Honorable [Insert Member Name]

United States Representative [or Senator)

District Office Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Representative (or Senator) \_\_\_\_\_\_,

On behalf of **[Agency Name],** I write to thank you for taking the time to visit our facility and learn more about the employment issues facing people who are blind. We appreciate the support you demonstrated, and we hope that you will join us in positively changing people’s attitudes about blindness.

Our **XXX** employees are committed to providing service in the blind and disabled community of **[Insert State]**. On your tour, you were able to see first-hand the impact the AbilityOne Program has on the lives of our employees who are blind. With seven out of 10 working age Americans who are blind unemployed, our agency is dedicated to alleviating this problem by providing quality [products, services, xxx]. Every purchase through the AbilityOne Program creates jobs and sustains the economic independence of people who are blind or severely disabled.

We really enjoyed hosting you and your staff, **[Insert Names]** at our facilities. Your presence meant so much to the employees. **[Insert any personal details from the meeting, e.g. “We all enjoyed hearing your thoughts on the current state of disability policy” or “We hope your opportunity to participate in the production line gave you a real feel for what our employees’ do every day”, “We were so happy to hear that you are committed to being an AbilityOne Champion.”**

If you or your staff has any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact **[Insert Appropriate Contact]**. Again, thank you for your leadership and tireless efforts in Washington, D.C. Please let us know if we can be a resource to you or your staff as you as consider important issues that affect our industry.

Sincerely,

Name of CEO

Title, Agency

cc: Any appropriate personal and/or committee staff member

**Sample Staffer Thank You Email**

Dear **[Insert staffer’s name]**

On behalf of **[Agency Name],** thank you for taking the time to join **[Insert Congressman/woman’s name]** for a visit to our facility. We enjoyed having you both here to learn more about the employment issues facing people who are blind. As you can certainly tell, we are passionate about alleviating the unemployment problem and positively changing people’s attitudes about blindness.

Our **XXX** number of employees are proud of the work we’re doing through the AbilityOne Program. We would be happy at any time to answer your questions or concerns and look forward to working with you on this important issue.

*Here you should follow up on any details discussed during the visit – How to become an AbilityOne Champion; information on supportive small businesses in the area, etc.*

Thanks again for your time. Please feel free to contact me anytime.

Sincerely,

Name

Title, Agency

**Ways to Continue Advocacy Year Round**

* **Stay in touch.** Add Members to your mailing list for newsletters, press releases, and other communications and public announcements. It enhances the statement when you add a brief personal note conveying how much you appreciate the legislator’s interest in your work.
* **Use Social Media**. See the social media page in this Tool Kit to set up a Facebook or Twitter account and post and comment on your Members’ sites.
* **Get Involved.** Participate in a town hall and give voice to your issues.
* **Find Personal Connections.** Does one of your board members, employees, or volunteers have a connection to your elected officials or a member of their staff? Try to find and leverage existing relationships.
* **Be a Resource.** Share your knowledge and expertise with officials who are looking for innovative ways to serve their community. Once they see your value, they will begin reaching out to you.
* **Politics is local.** Call on your state legislators when you’re at the state Capitol and reach out to local officials as well. Communications to Members from local officials can be especially helpful in supplementing your own advocacy efforts.
* **Send thank-you notes apart from visits**. Members like to be appreciated. Get into the habit of thanking them for any action that supports your agency’s interests. Also thank them in newsletter articles and in letters to the editor.
* **Informal personal connections.** Encourage your staff, board and volunteers to introduce themselves to Members at community events and public hearings and to chat about the good work you’re doing. These contacts serve as good reminders and make an impression.
* **Celebrate.** Involve Members in celebrating your accomplishments. When you recognize a special donor, or hold a special event, invite your Members using a similar plan as the one in this Tool Kit. If you send out a press advisory, enclose a copy with the invitation to legislators, increasing their motivation to attend.
* **Alert the Media.** Get into the habit of sending press releases to local papers that report on events after they happen. If Members attend, be sure to mention it in the release along with a photo and print the photo in your newsletter. Send a copy of the photo with your thank-you to each legislator who attended.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**What if I don’t get a call back?**

Don’t be discouraged if you don’t get a call back on your first try. Members and their staff are very busy and get a lot of requests. Once you have submitted the official letters and emails, follow up occasionally and tell them you understand they’re busy and would love to schedule a visit when they get the time. Be persistent but not pushy.

**Can nonprofits lobby? If so, to what extent?**

Nonprofits have every right to advocate on behalf of policies they believe in. It is only when this advocacy deals with specific legislation that limits come into play. Public charities may engage in a limited amount of legislative lobbying under the "substantial part" test, based on certain facts and circumstances, such as the time (by both paid and volunteer workers) and the expenditures devoted to lobbying by the organization. Participating in the activities outlined in this tool kit on an occasional basis will not come close to exceeding these limits.

**Can I give the Member a gift?**

A Member may accept virtually any gift valued below $50, with a limitation of less than $100 in gifts from any single source in a calendar year.  Gifts having a value of less than $10 do not count toward the annual limit.

**Can I contribute to the Member’s campaign?**

As an individual, you have the right to contribute up to $2,500 to each candidate or candidate committee per election. However, you should not make this contribution in conjunction with a visit or meeting.

**Are there any special considerations in an election year?**

Nonprofit organizations are prohibited from endorsing candidates or otherwise participating in political campaign activities. It’s OK to thank legislators publicly, but carefully avoid any communication that appears to be urging folks to vote for—or against—them!

**Do the Congressional calendars ever deviate from the schedule?**

All the time! But usually the district work periods (i.e., recesses) focused around holidays and the extended one in August are fairly firm.

**What if I’m asked a question I don’t know the answer to?**

Don’t worry – it happens all the time. Whatever you do, don’t make it up! Let the Member know that you’re not sure but will get back to him/her. Then do your research (or ask NIB) and follow up with the staff to provide an answer.

**Are there other awards/recognitions I can give to a Member?**

Sure. The AbilityOne Champion award is reserved for Members who have met the designated criteria, and we hope you will encourage your Members to participate. However, if you would like to also create a special award from your agency, it would be appreciated.

**APPENDIX**

**NATIONAL INDUSTRIES FOR THE BLIND**

**2011 OVERVIEW**

**The mission of National Industries for the Blind (NIB) is to enhance the opportunities for economic and personal independence of persons who are blind, primarily through creating, sustaining and improving employment.** NIB, along with its 90 associated nonprofit agencies, serves as the largest employer of people who are blind through the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act, which established the AbilityOne Program. While NIB has made great strides in advancing job opportunities for people who are blind, there is still much to accomplish, as more than 70 percent of individuals who are blind are not employed.

**By the Numbers**

**National Industries for the Blind and our associated nonprofit agencies:**

* **Employ more than 6,000 people who are blind each year**
* **Produce more than 3,500 different products and services**
* **Created 528 new job opportunities for people who are blind in 2010**
* **Increased wages by 6.2% - - Average hourly rate $8.95**
* **Pay more than $100 million per year in wages and benefits for employees**
* **Offer rehabilitative services to more than 168,307 persons who are blind nationwide**
* **Operate more than 140 base supply centers on military and federal government facilities**

**AbilityOne Program**

NIB operates under the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act (JWOD), the authorizing legislation for the AbilityOne Program, a federal purchasing program that enables people who are blind to work and provide products and services to federal and commercial customers. Like other businesses, NIB works to deliver quality products on time and at competitive prices. NIB mentors and supports its agencies through business development, program management, and marketing and sales.

**Employment and Cost Savings**

NIB encourages and rewards upward mobility and goes beyond the program’s mission by expanding employment options at all levels. More than 1,000 people who are blind each year receive professional training, increasing productivity and expanding role responsibility through NIB’s Business Leaders Program. Services have been added to employment options, increasing opportunities within our associated agencies and external companies. Through expanded employment, more people who are blind are able to be employed, yielding an increased savings and benefit to the federal government. Conservatively, our program saves the federal government $2.6 million annually.

**How to Become an AbilityOne Champion**

**An AbilityOne Champion supports the enhancement of opportunities for economic and personal independence of persons who are blind**

**or have other severe disabilities.**

An AbilityOne Champion is an elected policymaker who has demonstrated commitment to the AbilityOne Program by supporting an associated agency in his or her district or state through congressional actions.

**The four criteria to become a Champion include:**

1. Meeting with an AbilityOne nonprofit associated agency representative in your Washington, D.C., office.

2. Visiting an AbilityOne nonprofit agency employment location and meeting people who are blind producing products or providing services for Federal Agency customers.

3. Purchasing and using SKILCRAFT® and other products produced through the AbilityOne Program in your office(s).

4. Supporting the AbilityOne Program through one of the following “on the record” communications:

a. Letter of support

b. Press conference statement

c. Congressional record statement

d. Introduction of the AbilityOne Program to a Federal Agency

e. Sponsorship of legislation supporting the AbilityOne Program

****

**Alabama**

Rep. Jo Bonner

Rep. Mike Rogers

**Alaska**

Rep. Don Young

**Arizona**

Rep. Raul Grijalva

**Arkansas**

Sen. John Boozman

Rep. Tim Griffin

**California**

Sen. Dianne Feinstein

Rep. Brian Bilbray

Rep. Susan Davis

Rep. Sam Farr

Rep. Bob Filner

Rep. Lynn Woolsey

**Colorado**

Rep. Diana DeGette

**District of Columbia**

Rep. Eleanor Holmes

Norton

**Florida**

Sen. Bill Nelson

**Georgia**

Sen. Saxby Chambliss

Sen. Johnny Isakson

Rep. John Barrow

Rep. Sanford Bishop, Jr.

Rep. Paul Broun

Rep. Phil Gingrey

Rep. Henry C. "Hank” Johnson, Jr.

Rep. John Lewis

Rep. Tom Price

Rep. David Scott

Rep. Lynn Westmoreland

**Guam**

Rep. Madeleine Bordallo

**Hawaii**

Rep. Mazie Hirono

**Illinois**

Sen. Richard Durbin

Sen. Mark Kirk

Rep. Danny Davis

Rep. Janice Schakowsky

**Indiana**

Rep. Dan Burton

**Iowa**

Sen. Chuck Grassley

Sen. Tom Harkin

Rep. Leonard Boswell

**Kansas**

Sen. Jerry Moran

Sen. Pat Roberts

**Kentucky**

Rep. Harold Rogers

**Louisiana**

Sen. Mary Landrieu

Sen. David Vitter

Rep. Rodney Alexander

**Maine**

Sen. Susan Collins

**Maryland**

Sen. Benjamin Cardin

Sen. Barbara Mikulski

Rep. Roscoe Bartlett

Rep. Steny Hoyer

Rep. C.A. "Dutch"

Ruppersberger

**Massachusetts**

Rep. Michael Capuano

Rep. Barney Frank

Rep. Stephen Lynch

Rep. Edward Markey

Rep. Jim McGovern

Rep. John Tierney

**Michigan**

Sen. Carl Levin

Sen. Debbie Stabenow

Rep. Dan Benishek

Rep. Dave Camp

Rep. Dale Kildee

Rep. Michael Rogers

Rep. Fred Upton

**Minnesota**

Rep. Betty McCollum

Rep. Collin Peterson

**Mississippi**

Sen. Thad Cochran

Rep. Gregg Harper

Rep. Bennie G. Thompson

**Missouri**

Rep. William Lacy Clay, Jr.

Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, II

Rep. Sam Graves

Rep. Vicky Hartzler

**Nevada**

Sen. Harry Reid

Sen. Dean Heller

Rep. Shelley Berkley

**New Jersey**

Rep. Robert Andrews

**New Mexico**

Sen. Jeff Bingaman

Rep. Martin Heinrich

**New York**

Rep. Maurice D. Hinchey

Rep. Jerrold Nadler

Rep. Louise Slaughter

Rep. Edolphus Towns

Rep. Richard Hanna

**North Carolina**

Sen. Richard Burr

Sen. Kay Hagan

Rep. G.K. Butterfield

Rep. Howard Coble

Rep. Virginia Foxx

Rep. Walter Jones

Rep. David Price

Rep. Heath Shuler

Rep. Melvin Watt

**Ohio**

Rep. Steve Austria

Rep. Steve Chabot

Rep. Tim Ryan

**Oklahoma**

Rep. James Lankford

**Pennsylvania**

Rep. Tim Holden

Rep. Tom Marino

Rep. Joseph Pitts

**Rhode Island**

Rep. James Langevin

**South Dakota**

Sen. Tim Johnson

Sen. John Thune

**Tennessee**

Rep. Phil Roe

**Texas**

Sen. John Cornyn

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison

Rep. Michael Conaway

Rep. Henry Cuellar

Rep. Louie Gohmert

Rep. Charles Gonzalez

Rep. Kay Granger

Rep. Ralph Hall

Rep. Silvestre Reyes

Rep. Pete Sessions

Rep. William "Mac" Thornberry

**Utah**

Sen. Orrin Hatch

Rep. Rob Bishop

Rep. Jason Chaffetz

Rep. Jim Matheson

**Virginia**

Rep. Gerry Connolly

Rep. James Moran

Rep. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott

Rep. Rob Wittman

**Washington**

Sen. Maria Cantwell

Sen. Patty Murray

Rep. Norman Dicks

Rep. Rick Larsen

Rep. Jim McDermott

Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers

**Wisconsin**

Sen. Herb Kohl

Rep. Gwen Moore

Rep. James Sensenbrenner

**Use SKILCRAFT® Office Supplies in Your Congressional Office**

**Every Purchase Creates Jobs**

Thank you for your support of the AbilityOne Program! SKILCRAFT and other products in the AbilityOne Program fulfill the sourcing provisions of the Javits-Wagner-O’Day Act, the authorizing legislation for the AbilityOne Program. By supporting our partnership, you are helping provide meaningful job opportunities and increased independence to more than 47,000 people who are blind or severely disabled.

SKILCRAFT and other products produced through the AbilityOne Program are available by visiting your stationery supply store, through GSA Advantage (www.GSAAdvantage.gov) and AbilityOne.com.

**Stationery Supply Store**

Shopping at your stationery supply store in the House or Senate may be the quickest way to buy SKILCRAFT or other AbilityOne products. If your stationery store does not carry the items you seek, follow these simple steps:

* **House of Representatives Stationery Supply Store**
* Provide your AbilityOne order to your respective state office coordinator, located at the First Call Office. The office coordinator will purchase the products through OfficeMax (an AbilityOne authorized distributor).
* **Senate Stationery Supply Store**
* SKILCRAFT and other AbilityOne products can be found in the “George Allen” catalog. Simply contact Tony Super, manager of the stationery supply store, and he’ll place your order through George Allen and Associates (an AbilityOne authorized distributor).
* **GSA Global Supply and AbilityOne authorized commercial distributors**
* AbilityOne and SKILCRAFT products are available through GSA Global Supply and over 400 authorized commercial distributors. NOTE: Most of the commercial distributors carry various socio-economic status attributes including small business, disabled veteran owned business, etc.
* When shopping at GSA Advantage online, look for the AbilityOne logo; manufacturer names “AbilityOne” or “NIB” or “SKILCRAFT” in the product name or description. The AbilityOne logo assures that you are buying the AbilityOne item through an authorized distributor and therefore creating jobs for people who are blind or severely disabled.

**Shopping on AbilityOne.com**

A complete list of SKILCRAFT items ­ sold through the AbilityOne Program ­ including selected commercial items, is located at www.AbilityOne.com. If you have a question regarding the AbilityOne Program or about a specific product, you may contact the AbilityOne Customer Service team at 1-800-433-2304 or [customer\_service@nib.org](mailto:customer_service@nib.org).

**Taxpayer Benefits of National Industries for the Blind’s (NIB)**

**Portion of the AbilityOne Program**

*Conducted for NIB by Dr. Richard Wertheimer*

**FACT FINDINGS:**

In 2010, prominent labor economist Dr. Richard Wertheimer completed an exhaustive federal taxpayer benefit analysis of NIB’s portion of the AbilityOne Program, concluding:

* An extensive analysis of the employment generated through NIB’s portion of the AbilityOne Program identified **savings** to the federal government of a minimum of $3.33 for every $1 spent on federal oversight of NIB’s share of the program.
* **The NIB portion of the AbilityOne Program saves more than $2.6 million per year,** which is returned to the federal government through a combination of higher tax receipts and lower federal support payments to the 4,606 employees who participate.
* The breakdown analysis found the 4,606 employees who are blind working for NIB associated agencies through the AbilityOne Program **contribute** an additional **$5.3 million in payroll taxes** and **$1.2** **million in** **federal income taxes** to the U.S. Treasury.

**SURVEY BACKGROUND:**

NIB and its associated nonprofit agencies create employment opportunities and increase hours worked for taxpayers who are blind across the country, enhancing their earning potential.

* **Benefits to Federal Government.** Benefits to the federal government include increased Payroll Tax receipts and Federal Income Tax receipts. Additional benefits to the federal government include lower payments for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Food Stamps: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Welfare: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Unemployment.
* **Reduced Need for Assistance.** Without these jobs, many people who are blind would be significantly more dependent on federal support programs such as unemployment assistance, SSI, Food Stamps (SNAP), Welfare (TANF), and Medicaid.

**Economic Independence:** Through the AbilityOne Program, employees who are blind at NIB’s associated agencies successfully build their skill sets with excellent pay and benefits. This, in turn, allows employees who are blind to achieve greater economic independence.

**Small Business Partnerships Help to**

**Create Jobs for People Who Are Blind**

One of NIB’s most important strategic initiatives is to expand our successful partnerships with small businesses, including diverse suppliers and service-disabled, veteran-owned businesses.

NIB’s associated nonprofit agencies look to small business vendors across the United States as **sources of supply** and **channels of distribution** to the federal government customer. These relationships capitalize on the strengths and skills of each organization, resulting in a win-win-win for the small business, the federal customer and the agency employees who are blind.

Key Messages:

1. **We buy from small business:** NIB associated agencies purchase more than 38 percent of all raw materials and components from small businesses, far surpassing the annual requirements that federal agencies target for the utilization of small businesses.

2. **We contract with small businesses:** NIB associated agencies subcontract more than 35 percent of their work to small businesses.

**3. We sell to small businesses:** NIB’s partnerships with small business are essential to our success in distributing products to the federal customer, creating jobs for people who are blind and expanding business opportunities for small business owners.

**NIB associated agencies work with small businesses across the country such as:**

**Rocky Mountain Ram**, a woman-owned, small disadvantaged business in Louisville, Colorado, that teams with North Central Sight Services (NCSS) in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, to manufacture a comprehensive line of computer flash drives. After the flash drives were added to the AbilityOne Procurement List in 2007, sales reached $4 million the following year, creating eight jobs for people who are blind. Today, 35 people who are blind are employed as a result of the Rocky Mountain Ram/NCSS partnership.

NCSS supplies USB swivel cap flip drives and traditional ultra-sleek flash drives, both in FIPS-certified encrypted format, as well as standard plug-and-play drives that support password protection. These flash drives are TAA (Trade Agreement Acts) compliant and fully assembled in the United States.

In 2006, Rocky Mountain Ram was named one of the top 25 woman-owned local businesses in the Denver area. Other awards include the 2007 “Outstanding Partner of the Year” award from NCSS, which has supported Rocky Mountain Ram at government trade shows and advised on designs, technology and trends.

**Rotary Pen**, a small manufacturer of pen parts in Garwood, New Jersey, which began working with NIB in 1970 to design a black retractable ballpoint pen for the federal government. Today, more than 210 people who are blind at eight NIB associated agencies, including Industries of the Blind in Greensboro, North Carolina, and Industries for the Blind in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, produce over 55 million writing instruments annually.

The U.S. Government ballpoint pen is the first office product ever made through the AbilityOne Program and was the entry point to the full line of office products produced today by associated agencies. Rotary Pen worked with NIB agencies to design the pen, meeting the federal government’s difficult engineering specs that required it to write approximately one mile, have a shelf life of at least three years, and perform in all environmental conditions, ranging from desert to rain forest to arctic climates.

NIB associated agencies manufacture more than 100,000 U.S. government pens per day.

NIB honored Rotary Pen with its Supplier Recognition award in 2007. During its more than 40-year partnership with NIB and its associated agencies, Rotary Pen has helped produce other writing instruments, such as permanent markers, stick pens, and environmentally friendly pens, all carrying the SKILCRAFT trademark.

**Alliance Rubber Company**, a woman-owned small business and producer of high-quality rubber bands, based in Hot Springs, Arkansas, that teamed with Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CABVI) in Utica, New York, for packaging and distribution. Alliance worked with CABVI to select machinery that enables CABVI employees who are blind to count and weigh the bulk bands, load them into boxes or bags, apply labels, pack them into shipping cartons, and distribute them in small quantities directly to federal government customers through multiple distribution channels.

While Alliance had a direct contract with GSA for 15 years, changing trends in federal government procurement reduced the company’s profits. By teaming with CABVI, Alliance gained SKILCRAFT® brand recognition and grew its federal government business, expanding its distribution network to more than 225 military base stores and 300 office supply dealers, most of which are small businesses.

Alliance is the only U.S. manufacturer of rubber bands, making them the only TAA (Trade Agreement Acts) compliant source of rubber bands. Alliance’s products contain a higher rubber content than bands produced in Asia. By partnering through the AbilityOne Program, Alliance and CABVI provide 100% American-made, high-quality rubber bands to the federal government at a competitive price.

**Stride**, a certified Woman-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE) in Albuquerque, New Mexico, which produces office products such as ring binders and writing instruments, and performs custom manufacturing in its Reno, Nevada, facility. Teaming with South Texas Lighthouse for the Blind in Corpus Christi beginning in 2009, Stride provides a patent pending tool that enables South Texas Lighthouse employees to remove binder rings, which classifies the notebook binders as 100% recyclable.

South Texas Lighthouse sells the binders under the SKILCRAFT® brand through the AbilityOne Program to federal government and U.S. military customers.

Stride began as a nonprofit organization that employed people with disabilities, becoming a for-profit business in 1988. The company has earned a solid reputation for producing quality products at competitive prices. Because Stride’s founder had a child with a disability, Stride has kept its nonprofit heritage as part of its mission to provide employment – a good match for teaming with South Texas Lighthouse.

**Social Media and Interacting with Your**

**Congressional Representatives**

# Purpose of Social Media:

Social media, when incorporated into the Communications Plan, can increase all forms of communication efforts – public relations, government relations, media relations and outreach, etc. The purpose of using social media is to reach your targeted audience through a unique method of communication, a brand of communication tools that have gained immense popularity over the years and create an incredible amount of online traffic. Needless to say if you’re not using social media, you’re missing out on a reliable source of communication and interaction with key stakeholders.

# Social Media Identities:

While there are currently what seem to be hundreds of different types of social media opportunities, NIB is focusing on the following three major sources and encourages you use these as examples for your associated agency’s social media outreach.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Facebook-icon.png | **Facebook:** Facebook is now the leading search engine and has over 500 million active users. Facebook contains many features such as: microblogging, photo sharing, event notifications, video links, and much more. NIB posts pictures, links to interesting news stories, and encourages interaction from fans. <http://www.facebook.com/nibabilityone> |
| Twitter-icon.png | **Twitter:** A microblogging service using 140 characters or less.  Twitter is one of the fastest growing social media and information sharing sites and enhances engagement with current potential employees, customers, and more.  NIB’s Twitter account is @NIBAbilityOne. <http://twitter.com/nibabilityone> |
| youtubeicon2.png | **YouTube:** YouTube is an easy source for videos from National Industries for the Blind, old and new, as well as a tool to link to videos from associated agencies. YouTube is not 100% usable by all federal/government agencies, but is still a useful tool for maintaining videos online and we encourage video sharing between agencies. <http://www.youtube.com/NIBAbilityOne> |

These social media sources can serve as enhancements to one another by sharing and linking to similar information on all sites. By doing so increases the chance of a key stakeholder viewing the material and may have an effect on their participation in each form of social media.

Why Reach Out to Congressional Representatives: NIB constantly encourages our associated agencies to reach out to congressional leaders and spread the word about our mission. Social media is another tool to stay in contact with those who support the AbilityOne Program already and to help build new relationships.

**About Congressional Committees**

A Congressional committee is a legislative sub-organization of the United States Congress.  There are approximately 250 Congressional committees and subcommittees, each responsible for a different function, and made up of Members of Congress.  In order to deal with the large volume and complex work, Congress distributes legislative, oversight, and internal administrative tasks among these committees and subcommittees. Both the House of Representatives and Senate have their own committees. The preliminary work involved in any piece of legislation starts in committees and/or subcommittees of Congress.  In this capacity, Members conduct hearings and debates, and draft and revise proposed legislation.

Bills and resolutions that are officially introduced in the House of Representatives or Senate are referred to one or more committees.  Major legislation is usually referred to more than one.  A bill must first be considered and approved by the appropriate committee or subcommittee before any debate over it happens in the full House of Representatives or Senate.

All of the real legislative work originates in committees, which is what makes them so important. There is one committee in each chamber that specifically oversees the AbilityOne Program – the **Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs** (Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia) and the **House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform** (Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, U.S. Postal Service and Labor Policy).

Additionally, the committees below are also important to the NIB mission.

* The **Senate and House Armed Services Committees** determine all of the policy for the Department of Defense.
* The **Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee** has a broad jurisdiction over our country's health care, education, employment and retirement policies.
* The **Senate and House Appropriations Committees** write the legislation that allocates federal funds to the numerous government agencies, departments, and organizations on an annual basis.
* **The House Committee on Education and the Workforce** covers a broad spectrum of education and workforce initiatives.

The Membership of these committees is listed here for your reference when planning and carrying out visits and meetings. To make sure you have the most up to date list, visit [www.house.gov/committees](http://www.house.gov/committees) and [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) (click on Committees).

**Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs**

|  |  |
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| **Democrat** | **Republican** |
| Joseph I. Lieberman *Chairman* (Independent), Connecticut | [Susan M. Collins](http://collins.senate.gov/) *Ranking Member* , Maine |
|  |  |
| [\*Carl Levin](http://levin.senate.gov) , Michigan | \*[Tom Coburn](http://coburn.senate.gov) , Oklahoma |
|  |  |
| \*\*[Daniel K. Akaka](http://akaka.senate.gov) , Hawaii | [Scott Brown](http://scottbrown.senate.gov) , Massachusetts |
|  |  |
| [Thomas R. Carper](http://carper.senate.gov) , Delaware | [John McCain](http://mccain.senate.gov/) , Arizona |
|  |  |
| [Mark L. Pryor](http://pryor.senate.gov) , Arkansas | \*\*[Ron Johnson](http://ronjohnson.senate.gov/public/) , Wisconsin |
|  |  |
| \*[Mary L. Landrieu](http://landrieu.senate.gov) , Louisiana | \*[John Ensign](http://ensign.senate.gov/) , Nevada |
|  |  |
| [Claire McCaskill](http://mccaskill.senate.gov)  , Missouri | [Rob Portman](http://portman.senate.gov/) , Ohio |
|  |  |
| [Jon Tester](http://tester.senate.gov) , Montana | [Rand Paul](http://paul.senate.gov) , Kentucky |
|  |  |
| \*Mark Begich , Alaska |  |
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**\***Member of the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia

\*\*Chairman or Ranking Member of the Subcommittee

**Senate Committee on Armed Services**

***SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT***

|  |  |
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| **Democrats**  Claire McCaskill, Missouri, *Chairman*  Daniel Akaka, Hawaii  Ben Nelson, Nebraska  Jim Webb, Virginia  Mark Udall, Colorado  Mark Begich, Alaska  Joe Manchin, West Virginia  Jeanne Shaheen, New Hampshire | **Republicans**  Kelly Ayotte, New Hampshire, *Ranking*    James Inhofe, Oklahoma  Saxby Chambliss, Georgia  Rob Portman, Ohio  Susan Collins, Maine  Lindsey Graham, South Carolina  John Cornyn, Texas |

**Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP)**

**Democrats**

Tom Harkin, Iowa  
Barbara A. Mikulski, Maryland  
\*Jeff Bingaman, New Mexico  
\*\*Patty Murray, Washington  
Bernard Sanders (I), Vermont  
Robert P. Casey, Jr., Pennsylvania  
Kay R. Hagan, North Carolina  
Jeff Merkley, Oregon  
\*Al Franken, Minnesota  
\*Michael F. Bennet, Colorado  
\*Sheldon Whitehouse, Rhode Island  
\*Richard Blumenthal, Connecticut

**Republicans**

Michael B. Enzi, Wyoming  
\*Lamar Alexander, Tennessee Richard Burr, North Carolina  
\*\*Johnny Isakson, Georgia  
Rand Paul, Kentucky  
\*Orrin G. Hatch, Utah  
John McCain, Arizona  
Pat Roberts, Kansas  
Lisa Murkowski, Alaska  
\*Mark Kirk, Illinois

\*Subcommittee on Employment and Workplace Safety

\*\*Chairman or Ranking Member of the Subcommittee

**Senate Committee on Appropriations**

***Defense Subcommittee***

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| **Democrats**  Daniel Inouye, Hawaii, *Chairman*    Patrick Leahy, Rhode Island  Tom Harkin, Iowa  Richard Durbin, Illinois  Diane Feinstein, California  Barbara Mikulski, Maryland  Herb Kohl, Wisconsin  Patty Murray, Washington  Tim Johnson, South Dakota  Jack Reed, Rhode Island | **Republicans**  Thad Cochran, Mississippi, *Ranking*  Mitch McConnell, Kentucky  Richard Shelby, Alabama  Kay Bailey Hutchison, Texas  Lamar Alexander, Tennessee  Susan Collins, Maine  Lisa Murkowski, Alaska  Lindsey Graham, South Carolina  Dan Coats, Indiana |
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***Homeland Security Subcommittee***

|  |  |
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| **Democrats**  Mary Landrieu, Louisiana, *Chairman*  Frank Lautenberg, New Jersey  Daniel Inouye, Hawaii  Patrick Leahy, Rhode Island  Patty Murray, Washington  Jon Tester, Montana | **Republicans**  Dan Coats, Indiana, *Ranking*    Thad Cochran, Mississippi  Richard Shelby, Alabama  Lisa Murkowski, Alaska  Jerry Moran, Kansas |

***Labor, Health, Education Subcommittee***

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| **Democrats**  Tom Harkin, Iowa, *Chairman*  Daniel Inouye, Hawaii  Herb Kohl, Wisconsin  Patty Murray, Washington  Mary Landrieu, Louisiana  Richard Durbin, Illinois  Jack Reed, Rhode Island  Mark Pryor, Arkansas  Barbara Mikulski, Maryland  Sherrod Brown, Ohio | **Republicans**  Richard Shelby, Alabama, *Ranking*    Thad Cochran, Mississippi  Kay Bailey Hutchison, Texas  Lamar Alexander, Tennessee  Ron Johnson, Wisconsin  Mark Kirk, Illinois  Lindsey Graham, South Carolina  Jerry Moran, Kansas |

***Military Construction/VA Subcommittee***

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| **Democrats**  Tim Johnson, South Dakota, *Chairman*  Daniel Inouye, Hawaii  Mary Landrieu, Louisiana  Patty Murray, Washington  Jack Reed, Rhode Island  Ben Nelson, Nebraska  Mark Pryor, Arkansas  Jon Tester, Montana | **Republicans**  Mark Kirk, Illinois, *Ranking*  Kay Bailey Hutchison, Texas  Mitch McConnell, Kentucky  Lisa Murkowski, Alaska  Roy Blunt, Missouri  John Hoeven, North Dakota  Dan Coats, Indiana |

**House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform**

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| **Republicans**  Darrell E. Issa, California, *Chairman*  Dan Burton, Indiana  John L. Mica, Florida  Todd Platts, Pennsylvania  Michael R. Turner, Ohio  Patrick T. McHenry, North Carolina  \*Jim Jordan, Ohio  \*Jason Chaffetz, Utah  \*Connie Mack, Florida  \*Tim Walberg, Michigan  James Lankford, Oklahoma  \*Justin Amash, Michigan  Ann Marie Buerkle, New York  Paul Gosar, Arizona  Raul Labrador, Idaho  Pat Meehan, Pennsylvania  Scott DesJarlais, Tennessee  Joe Walsh, Illinois  \*Trey Gowdy, South Carolina  \*\*Dennis Ross, Florida  Blake Farenthold, Texas  Frank Guinta, New Hampshire  Rep. Mike Kelly, Pennsylvania | **Democrats**  Elijah E. Cummings, Maryland, *Ranking*  Edolphus Towns, New York  Carolyn B. Maloney, New York  \*Eleanor Holmes Norton, District of Columbia  Dennis J. Kucinich, Ohio  John F. Tierney, Massachusetts  Wm. Lacy Clay, Missouri  \*\*Stephen F. Lynch, Massachusetts  Jim Cooper, Tennessee  \*Gerald E. Connolly, Virginia  Mike Quigley, Illinois  \*Danny K. Davis, Illinois  Bruce Braley, Iowa  Peter Welch, Vermont  Rep. John Yarmuth, Kentucky  Rep. Christopher S. Murphy, Connecticut  Jackie Speier, California |

\*Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, U.S. Postal Service and Labor Policy

\*\*Chairman or Ranking Member of the Subcommittee

**House Committee on Education and the Workforce**

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| **Republicans** [John Kline, Minnesota](http://kline.house.gov/), *Chairman*                                   [Thomas E. Petri, Wisconsin](http://petri.house.gov/) [Howard P. “Buck” McKeon, California](http://mckeon.house.gov/) [Judy Biggert, Illinois](http://biggert.house.gov/) [Todd Russell Platts, Pennsylvania](http://www.house.gov/platts/) \*[Joe Wilson, South Carolina](http://joewilson.house.gov/) [Virginia Foxx, North Carolina](http://foxx.house.gov/) [Duncan D. Hunter, California](http://hunter.house.gov/) \*\*[David “Phil” Roe, Tennessee](http://roe.house.gov/)  \*[Glenn Thompson, Pennsylvania](http://thompson.house.gov/) \*[Tim Walberg, Michigan](http://walberg.house.gov/) \*[Scott DesJarlais, Tennessee](http://desjarlais.house.gov/) \*[Richard Hanna, New York](http://hanna.house.gov/) \*[Todd Rokita, Indiana](http://rokita.house.gov/) \*[Larry Bucshon, Indiana](http://bucshon.house.gov/) [Trey Gowdy, South Carolina](http://gowdy.house.gov/) \*[Lou Barletta, Pennsylvania](http://barletta.house.gov/) \*[Kristi Noem, South Dakota](http://noem.house.gov/) \*[Martha Roby, Alabama](http://roby.house.gov/) \*[Joe Heck, Nevada](http://heck.house.gov/) \*[Dennis Ross, Florida](http://dennisross.house.gov/) [Mike Kelly, Pennsylvania](http://kelly.house.gov/) Vacancy | **Democrats** [George Miller, California](http://georgemiller.house.gov/), *Ranking*  \*[Dale E. Kildee, Michigan](http://www.house.gov/kildee/) [Donald M. Payne, New Jersey](http://www.house.gov/payne/) \*\*[Robert E. Andrews, New Jersey](http://www.house.gov/andrews/) \*[Robert C. Scott, Virginia](http://www.house.gov/scott/) [Lynn C. Woolsey, California](http://woolsey.house.gov/) \*[Rubén Hinojosa, Texas](http://www.house.gov/hinojosa/) \*[Carolyn McCarthy, New York](http://carolynmccarthy.house.gov/) \*[John F. Tierney, Massachusetts](http://www.house.gov/tierney/) \*[Dennis J. Kucinich, Ohio](http://kucinich.house.gov/) \*[David Wu. Oregon](http://www.house.gov/wu/) \*[Rush D. Holt, New Jersey](http://holt.house.gov/) [Susan A. Davis, California](http://www.house.gov/susandavis/) [Raúl M. Grijalva, Arizona](http://www.house.gov/grijalva/) [Timothy H. Bishop, New York](http://wwwc.house.gov/timbishop/) \*[Dave Loebsack, Iowa](http://loebsack.house.gov/) [Mazie Hirono, Hawaii](http://hirono.house.gov/) |

\*Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions

\*\*Chairman or Ranking Member of the Subcommittee

**House Committee on Armed Services – Readiness Subcommittee**

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| **Republicans**  J. Randy Forbes, Virginia, *Chairman*  Mike Rogers, Alabama  Joe Heck, Nevada  Austin Scott, Georgia  Frank A. LoBiondo, New Jersey  Chris Gibson, New York  Vicky Hartzler, Missouri  Bobby Schilling, Illinois  Jon Runyan, New Jersey  Tim Griffin, Arkansas  Martha Roby, Alabama  Steve Palazzo, Mississippi | **Democrats**  Madeleine Z. Bordallo, Guam, *Ranking*  Silvestre Reyes, Texas  Joe Courtney, Connecticut  David Loebsack, Iowa  Larry Kissell, North Carolina  William L. Owens, New York  Tim Ryan, Ohio |

**House Committee on Appropriations**

***Defense Subcommittee***

|  |  |  |
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| **Republicans**  Bill Young, Florida , *Chairman*  Jerry Lewis, California  Rodney Frelinghuysen, New Jersey  Jack Kingston, Georgia  Kay Granger, Texas  Ander Crenshaw, Florida  Ken Calvert, California  Jo Bonner, Alabama  Tom Cole, Oklahoma | **Democrats**  Norm Dicks, Washington, *Ranking*  Peter Visclosky, Indiana  Jim Moran, Virginia  Marcy Kaptur, Ohio  Steven Rothman, New Jersey  Maurice Hinchey, New York | |
| ***Homeland Security Subcommittee***   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Republicans**  Robert Aderholt, Alabama, *Chairman*  John Carter, Texas  John Culberson, Texas  Rodney Frelinghuysen, New Jersey  Tom Latham, Iowa  Ander Crenshaw, Florida  Charlie Dent, Pennsylvania | **Democrats**  David Price, North Carolina, *Ranking*  Lucille Roybal-Allard, California  Nita Lowey, New York  John Olver, Massachusetts |   ***Labor, Health, Education Subcommittee***   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Republicans**  Denny Rehberg, Montana, *Chairman*  Jerry Lewis, California  Rodney Alexander, Louisiana  Jack Kingston, Georgia  Kay Granger, Texas  Mike Simpson, Idaho  Jeff Flake, Arizona  Cynthia Lummis, Wyoming | **Democrats**  Rosa DeLauro, Connecticut, *Ranking*  Nita Lowey, NY  Jesse Jackson, IL  Lucille Roybal-Allard, CA  Barbara Lee, CA |   ***Military Construction/VA Subcommittee***   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Republicans**  John Culberson, Texas, *Chairman*  Bill Young, Florida  John Carter, Texas  Jeff Flake, Arizona  Steve Austria, Ohio  Kevin Yoder, Kansas  Alan Nunnelee, Mississippi | **Democrats**  Sanford Bishop, Georgia, *Ranking*  Sam Farr, California  Betty McCollum, Minnesota  Jim Moran, Virginia | | |  | |

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| **Senate 2012 published schedule** | **2012 Holidays & Special Events** | **House 2012 published schedule** House Recess = “District work period” |
| **January 23**  Senate Convenes | **January 1** New Year’s Day  **January 16** Martin Luther King Jr. Day  **January 17** 112th Congress, Second Session, convenes (pro-forma)  **January 24** State of the Union (tentative) | **January 17**  House Convenes  **January 19 – 20**  House Republican Retreat  **January 26 – 27**  House Democratic Retreat |
| **February 20 – 24**  President’s Day Senate Recess | **February 6** President’s Budget submission \*  **February 12** Lincoln’s Birthday  **February 20** Presidents’ Day | **February 10-13**  House Recess  **February 18 – 26**  House Recess |
|  | **March 11** Daylight Savings Time begins (spring forward) | **March 9 – 18**  House Recess |
| **April 2 – 13**  Senate Recess | **April 6** Good Friday  **April 6** Passover begins at sundown  **April 8** Easter | **March 30 – April 15**  House Recess  **April 20 – 23**  House Recess |
| **April 30 – May 4**  Senate Recess  **May 28 – June 1**  Senate Recess | **May 28** Memorial Day | **April 28 – May 6**  House Recess  **May 11 – 14**  House Recess  **May 19 – 29**  House Recess |
|  | **June 14** Flag Day | **June 9 – 17**  House Recess  **June 22 – 25**  House Recess |
| **July 2-6**  Senate Recess | **July 4** Independence Day | **June 30 – July 8**  House Recess  **July 13 – 16**  House Recess  **July 27 – 30**  House Recess |
| **August 6 - September 7**  Senate Recess | **August 27 – 30**  Republican Convention  **September 3** Labor Day  **September 3 – 6**  Democratic Convention  **September 16**  Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown  **September 25**  Yom Kippur begins at sundown | **August 4 - September 9**  House Recess  **September 15 – 18**  House Recess  **September 22 – 30**  House Recess |
|  | **October 1** FY 2013 begins  **October 8** Columbus Day  **November 4** Daylight Savings Time ends (fall back)  **November 6** Election Day  **November 12** Veteran’s Day observed  **November 22** Thanksgiving Day | **October 6 – November 12**  House Recess  **November 17 – 26**  House Recess |
| **TBD**  Target Senate Adjournment | **December 8** Hanukkah begins at sundown  **December 25** Christmas Day | **December 7-10**  House Recess  **December 14**  Target House Adjournment |

Source: TheCapitol.Net

Schedules are always subject to change. For updates, visit <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/schedules.html> .