

State Captains Webinar

January, 2012

2012 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering
Faithful Citizenship:

Protecting Human Life and Dignity, Promoting the Common Good

Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
www.catholicsocialministrygathering.org

Welcome to the State Captains Webinar as we prepare for the 2012 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering. You are a vital part of making this Gathering a success. We want to give you the tools to help you prepare for the Gathering, especially those of you who are taking the role of state captain or co-captain for the first time.

This presentation will give you an update of where we are now with the Gathering and emphasize the importance of the Hill visits to our Catholic social action outreach. It will provide some information about the 112th Congress and touch on likely Hill issues, and give you tips on how to better organize your Hill visits.

Remember, we want to be a resource for you, as you are our force-multipliers in advocating for legislation that reflects Catholic social teaching.

Prayer

Gracious and loving God, let your Spirit be with us today. Hear our prayers, and increase in us the will to follow your Son Jesus. Help us to draw on the resources of our faith as we use the opportunities of our democracy to shape a society more respectful of the life, dignity, and rights of the human person, especially the poor and vulnerable. We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.

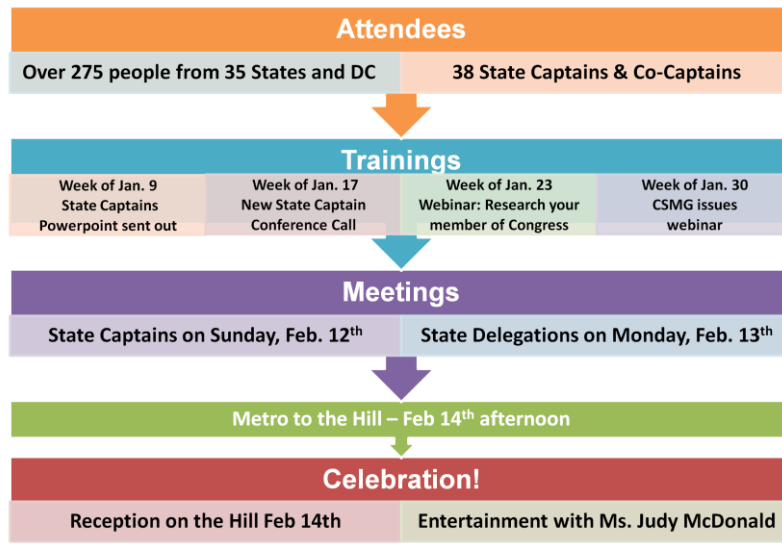
R. Amen

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This prayer epitomizes our hope to put Catholic Social Teaching into practice, especially during this election year.

This is Where We Are



By the time you come to Washington, most if not all appointments with Congressional offices should have been made. Please work with your delegation and send the compiled list of appointments for your group to Tom Mulloy (tmulloy@usccb.org) using the template provided earlier.

A Hill Visits orientation will be held Sunday, February 12 from 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. aimed primarily at first-time attendees.

State captains and co-captains will caucus Sunday, February 12, from 2:15-2:45 p.m. to tie up any loose ends, get your Hill packets, and prepare for your delegation meetings on Monday, February 13 at 11:00 a.m.

Briefings for both international and domestic issues will be February 13 from 3:15 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Following the Hill visits on February 14, there will be a Reception in the Kennedy Caucus Room, Russell Senate Office Building from 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. The day will conclude back at the hotel with entertainment by a Catholic comedian.

The Marriott Wardman Park Hotel is equipped with a number of computers to assist any Gathering participant in last-minute research on your members of Congress or on legislation. This will also be a prime location to fill out your Hill Visit report forms.

Hill Visits: Do They Matter?



Objective: Bring a unified message to Congress in areas of concern to Catholics

Constituents' voices on Capitol Hill matter; we've seen it with health care

Your local perspective and stories of why these issues are important have an impact

You help us identify opportunities to make a difference, build new relationships, build on prior relationships, and strengthen our ability to be more effective on Capitol Hill on behalf of the poor and vulnerable, here and abroad

As a constituent, your message can be more effective and carries much credibility with Members of Congress

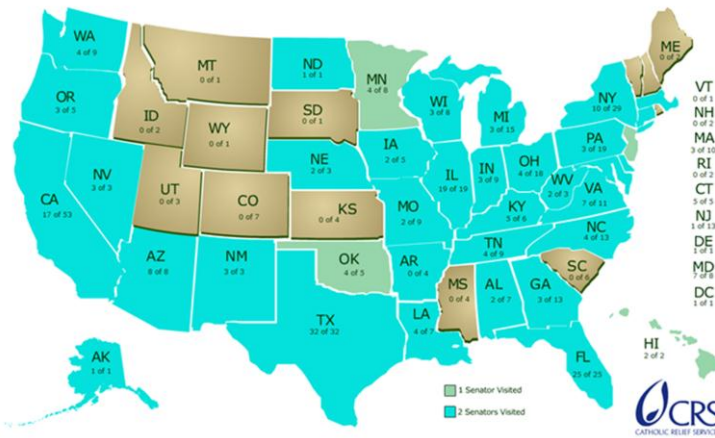
Not only do our voices matter, they are NECESSARY. Our voices advocate the needs of the poor and vulnerable--people who don't have a voice at the policymaking table.

You elect these members of Congress. Responding to constituents is a high priority for members and their staff.

An in-person visit from a constituent is likely to have the most influence on a Member of Congress who has not yet made a firm decision on an issue, even more than individualized letters or email messages.

Your meeting with your Member puts a human face on an issue, lets them know that you care and why.

Our Voices Really Matter!



In 2011 over 279 Congressional visits were made to 70 Senate offices and 209 House offices. The states in blue show that both Senators were visited in those states. The states in green had one Senator visited. The smaller numbers within each state show the number of House members visited. Gathering delegates from many of the small and medium-size states were able to visit all their members of Congress. We hope to match and exceed that total this year.

Relationships and Resources

More important than the statistics of how many visits were made is the quality of the visits--was your delegation able to make a connection with the Congressperson or a key staffer? This relationship will allow you to follow-up throughout the year on your issues.

Remember these visits can and should open up a dialogue--the Member of Congress and their staff get to hear the Church's views on certain pieces of legislation and how they impact the poor and vulnerable. At the same time, they can use you as a sounding board for ideas or ask for information about the district and the programs you work on related to an issue. In other words, one of our goals is to establish ourselves as resources for Congressional offices.

A Word of Thanks & Review of 112th Congress



Thank you for accepting the call to serve and lead your state's congressional visits.

112th Congress - many new members

- House – Republican controlled 242-193
- Senate – Democrat controlled 51-47, 2 Ind

Whether you're a state captain for the first time, a returning volunteer or a veteran, you are key to providing a voice for poor and vulnerable people. We bring moral principles, everyday experience, broad presence, many structures and people with us as we make our case on Capitol Hill.

We appreciate your hard work in organizing these Hill visits, since this is our one opportunity each year to descend on the Hill en masse and make the Catholic voice heard. These Hill visits are so important as they tie what we do here in February to your ongoing efforts during the rest of the year to advocate in your districts and dioceses.

For the 2012 elections, 33 Senator seats currently held by 20 Democrats, 11 Republicans, and 2 independents are up for re-elections but 8 current Senators have already indicated they do not plan to run again. All House seats are up for re-election.

The 112th Congress has been heavily partisan so far which has hampered the legislative process, and the prospects for bipartisanship are grim. In this atmosphere it is all the more important for us as Catholics to reach across party lines to advocate the needs of the poor and vulnerable.

Our leaders must hear our message of the need to protect the poor, even in times of tight budgets. Your efforts make that possible. We cannot balance the budget on the backs of the poor.

International:

**Preserving poverty-focused
International assistance for the
poorest countries, especially those in
crisis; for effective aid**

**Possible second issue if a nation is in
crisis**

Your advocacy in 2011 helped to hold the line on cuts Congress wanted make to programs for the poor. For Catholics, the budget is more than numbers, it's a moral document. We need to preserve poverty-focused international assistance funding for programs that help the poorest and most vulnerable people abroad.

Contrary to popular belief, international aid delivered by State Dept and U.S. Agency for International Development amounts to less than 1% of the federal budget. Of that amount, less than one third goes to poverty-focused development and humanitarian relief programs in the poorest countries. Each year this small amount of aid feeds starving people, assists refugees, prevents infants from being born with HIV, provides treatment for HIV-positive people, immunizes millions, and brings safe, reliable drinking water to large populations, preventing disease.

International humanitarian and development assistance levels should be maintained and focused on poverty-reduction in order to demonstrate solidarity with the poor in the world as well as U.S. global leadership. Engaging local communities and civil society as partners in shaping development programs has been a model that CRS has followed to ensure maximum impact with limited resources.

International assistance also provides much needed assistance in times of disaster, emergencies and civil conflicts. The U.S. is one of the few countries able to get relief supplies in quickly to disaster sites or to assist peacekeepers in stopping violence. The U.S. needs to maintain that capability and to help other countries build capacity to mitigate the impact of disasters and prevent future conflicts from erupting. Since poverty often leads to instability, preserving international assistance for the poorest and most vulnerable can help to improve security in the long-term.

Domestic (likely issues):

Forming a Circle of Protection around programs that serve poor and vulnerable people

Protecting unemployment insurance for those who have lost their jobs, and creating decent jobs with just wages

The domestic issues dovetail with the international issue by highlighting the moral dimensions of the federal budget and emphasizing our commitment to the common good.

Programs that protect poor and vulnerable people are at risk of suffering devastating cuts. Many of these programs provide funding for needed services at the state and local level.

Cuts to these programs have been put forth in the name of fiscal responsibility, but in fact, would not even put a dent in the federal deficit.

The unemployment rate remains high as our economy fails to create enough decent jobs. During times of high unemployment, we have an obligation to protect jobless workers and their families.

When you schedule an appointment, tell your senators and representative that you want to talk about the federal budget, specifically funding for human needs programs.

Remember to request meetings with your senators and representative. If they wish to include staff (which they probably will), please ask for the legislative director and/or the legislative assistants that handle budget and employment issues to be in attendance.

The Role of State Captains



Help lead and coordinate congressional visits by the members of your state's delegation.

While mainly responsible for setting up visits with your Senators, it is imperative to also get the members of your delegation to set up meetings with their Representatives. We can help with office phone numbers, if you need it.

Challenges and opportunities, sharing what works and what doesn't work. Advice from our colleagues. Others please chime in.

The role and degree of involvement of state captains and co-captains will vary depending on the size of your Gathering delegation and how many members in Congress you have to cover.

Overall your task is to guide your delegation in arranging visits to as many members of Congress from your state as possible, and to encourage them to establish a relationship with these offices, at the federal and state level.

You're responsible for setting up the Senate visits and letting your delegation know those meeting times so they can schedule around those visits if needed. If possible, schedule the Senate visits later in the afternoon of February 14 so that you can go from those meetings straight to the Hill Reception.

In the past, State Captains have found it helpful to work with diocesan staff to coordinate visits for large delegations. Also, it's helpful to try to engage delegates ahead of time about how to schedule a meeting. Encourage delegates to meet with Members in small groups (no more than 4-5 for Senate, 2-3 for House), but make sure that the Member's constituent takes the lead on expressing ideas and concerns.

Communicate with one another. Reach out to other State Captains that have a lot of experience at the CSMG.

Scheduling Visits



**Request appointments for Tues., Feb. 14 from 1:30 – 4:30 pm
(Hill reception in Russell Senate Office Bldg from 4:30 – 6:30 pm)**

Visit our Legislative Action Center to find contact information

Some may require faxing or (e-mailing) your request

Follow-up with a call to be sure your request is received

When confirmed, please share date, time, location and with whom you are meeting

We aim to have most of the appointments on February 14 afternoon between 1:30 and 4:30 p.m. however it may be that your member of Congress or key staffer is only available at some other time. You will have to be flexible as one of the key objectives of the CSMG is to build the relationship with your Members of Congress.

If you or your delegation don't know how to contact your Congressional representatives, visit our Legislative Action Center at <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/take-action-now/capwiz/>

Some offices may ask that you fax or email your request for a meeting. The Tips for State Captains to Guide CSMG Delegations in Setting up Hill Visits (sent January 6 to all state captains and co-captains) has a sample text for requesting an appointment. Once you've sent in your fax/email, be sure to follow-up with a phone call to the scheduler to make sure your request was received.

When you receive a response, be sure to get the name of the person you're meeting with and call again a day or two in advance to confirm the date and time, the location and the name of the person you're meeting.

Coordinating Visits



Don't assume that attendees know that they are responsible for scheduling their visit with their Representative (particularly first-timers).

Collect information on all visits, provide information to us, and to members of your delegation.

If you have a large delegation, ask who wants to go on which visits and see if anyone has a preference for speaking to particular issues.

If you have a small delegation in a state with many Members, you will need to prioritize who to see.

Let us know if your delegation needs someone to accompany you on a visit.

Make sure to encourage your delegation members to schedule meetings with their Representatives while you set up meetings with your Senators.

Try to get information on all visits scheduled and once you've compiled it, send it to Tom Mulloy (tmulloy@usccb.org). Use the template we sent out on January 6, or download it from: www.usccb.org/about/justice-peace-and-human-development/catholic-social-ministry-gathering/upload/Congressional-Visits-Template.xls

We'll try to maintain a master list of all appointments so that if for some reason, someone is ill and has to drop out, we have a record of what appointments were made and can hopefully work with you to have someone else step in.

Depending on the size of your delegation, you've got different issues to deal with. If you have a large CSMG delegation, you will need to decide who goes on which visits. If you have a small delegation but are from a medium to large size state in terms of population and number of Members, it's likely that you will not be able to schedule visits with all of your Members – you'll need to prioritize. A list called "Prioritizing Members of Congress for Hill Visits" will be sent out shortly and should help you decide who to see.

Most importantly for small delegations, if you feel you want someone from USCCB, CRS, or Catholic Charities USA to accompany you on the visits, be sure to let Ginny Farris and Tom Mulloy know by January 27. We will have you partner with someone here in Washington.

Getting a Head Start



Know about the Catholic presence in your district

Do your research (Member's website, bio, committee assignments, and news releases for his/her priorities)

Find out if your Senator or Representative has taken a position on the three Hill issues

If they are new to Congress, check on any statements made during campaigning on the issues

Share helpful tips with your delegation, where they might find information about their Representative

Hill packet (Hill notes, leave behind and invitation)

As you prepare for the Hill visits, get the facts about the Catholic presence in your district and state. How many Catholics are there? How many Catholic schools and hospitals are there? What type of social services do Catholic institutions provide in your community? All this will help buttress your case. Make sure that everyone in your delegation has this information down pat or bring along a crib sheet.

As state captain and co-captain, ask your delegation members to do the research on their representative. We will do a separate webinar to provide tips on how to research your Member's position on issues.

We don't ask you to become subject experts on the issues; you can always refer people back to us. But always remember that you ARE experts on the community and the people you serve. Speak honestly and from the heart, as concerned citizens.

If you are a 1 or 2 person delegation, you will have to prioritize which Members to contact and focus your efforts.

Ultimately, remember and remind your delegation that you are the constituent from the district or the state. You will carry information about your meetings on the Hill back to the larger Catholic population in your state. You have a valuable commodity – your vote.

Helpful Resources



www.CatholicSocialMinistryGathering.org click on Capitol Hill Visit information (Hill packet , directories, and helpful links)

Be sure to review Hill Notes (also with each registration packet). Backgrounders for all issues will be posted on CSMG website.

Library of Congress Thomas website to look up bills and voting records: <http://thomas.loc.gov>

New House members of 112th Congress:
<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/pictorial/112th/newmems.html>

Here are some resources for you and your delegation to check as you prepare for your Hill visits. Information will gradually be added to the first two listed as we finalize the issues.

Additional Resources

www.catholicsocialministrygathering.org

Library of Congress: <http://thomas.loc.gov>

New House members of 112th Congress:

<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/pictorial/112th/newmems.html>

www.govtrack.us

www.congress.org

www.politico.com

www.rollcall.com

www.thehill.com

www.nationaljournal.com

Social media: Check for Members' Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube pages

Your Feedback Matters



Fill out Hill Visits Report Back form

More information is better than less, but please one form per congressional visit.

Feel free to e-mail any additional information you want to share about a particular visit. *Electronic version provides more space for comments.*

If you're leaving early, you can fill out the form electronically or fax it to us.

We will be providing paper copies of Instant Hill Visits Report Forms to all state delegations. Remind your delegation that they need to assign one person to fill out this form for each visit made on Capitol Hill. Although there's only one report for each visit made to a Congressional office, all who participated in the visit should chime in with their impressions of the discussion. These paper forms can be turned in as you enter the Hill Reception as that will help us track how many visits were made.

Many meetings may be more of a familiarization exercise – you're telling the Member/staffer about the Catholic presence in your district/state and about the issues that are of concern to Catholics and they are basically listening but being non-committal as to their position.

But sometimes you may have a more substantive discussion with the Member or staffer. This year, if that happens, we'd like an Electronic Hill Visits Report and Feedback Form to be completed by the appropriate person on the visit. Among the information sought: Did the member or staffer express any strong opinions about the issues? Did they mention any bills or legislation they have sponsored related to the issues? Did they say what issues will absorb most of their attention and energy? What questions did they ask? What other information does the member or staffer want? This more detailed information will help to shape our advocacy efforts. These Electronic Hill Visits Report and Feedback Forms can be completed on one of the hotel's computers or when you return home.

Other Updates



Transportation assistance – Metro Cards

We will offer break out rooms to the largest delegations for State Delegations Meeting

Let us know how we can improve (evaluation forms appreciated)

This year, the Gathering is being held at the Washington Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, which is located away from Capitol Hill, near the Woodley Park Zoo metro stop. It will take about 45 minutes to go from the hotel to the Capitol South metro stop that is closest to the House office buildings (Cannon, Longworth and Rayburn). It will take about 30 minutes to go from the hotel to the Union Station metro stop that is closest to the Senate office buildings (Russell, Dirksen and Hart). Walking from the House to the Senate side of Capitol Hill will take 15-20 minutes. Please take these travel times into account when setting up your appointments.

Metro cards with enough fare prepaid to get someone to the Hill and back will be distributed, one per person, to those going on Hill visits as people register. If someone in your delegation has a visit scheduled at another time, please have them see the CSMG Registration Desk in the hotel for Metro cards.

If you have someone with a disability that needs to take a cab to the Hill, we have set aside a limited amount of funds for that purpose. Please let those at the CSMG Registration Desk know.

We have reserved six break-out rooms for the largest state delegations meetings. Let Ginny know if you think you will need one.

After the Gathering, we'll send out a brief questionnaire asking what worked and what could have been improved. We always want your input into how the Hill visits portion of the Gathering could be better so we can factor that into our planning for the future.

Reaching out to the Media



Discuss how to engage traditional and social media channels with your diocesan communications director

Ask for help with coverage in diocesan newspaper, on the diocesan website, and in local secular media

Use social media. Blog or tweet during the Gathering and from Capitol Hill

Use prepared media templates

Bring a camera to the CSMG and take pictures of your delegation with the Member.

As you try to expand awareness of Catholic social action concerns and attract attention to our issues, here are some tips on reaching out to the media.

Identify what is unique about your story, e.g. “Don’t balance the budget on the backs of the poor” and tie this statement to your experience about domestic and international poverty.

Media channels include: diocesan website, local/regional Catholic media, social media channels within the diocese, secular/local media. Your diocesan communications director can help you with placing your story.

While you’re at the CSMG, you can tweet or blog about what’s happening in your visit, using local/regional social media channels, and that may attract your legislator’s attention. A number of Congressional offices track social media to gauge public opinion.

Here are links to media advisory and press release templates but try to personalize the story about your meeting so it doesn’t sound like boilerplate. Get a quote from your elected official to add to the news release.

www.usccb.org/about/justice-peace-and-human-development/catholic-social-ministry-gathering/upload/Media-Advisory-TEMPLATE.docx

www.usccb.org/about/justice-peace-and-human-development/catholic-social-ministry-gathering/upload/Press-Release-TEMPLATE.docx

Take photos of your group with your elected official, perhaps in front of his/her office by the state flag. Having a picture makes your story/press release more attractive to media outlets, including diocesan newspapers.

Putting Our Faith into Action



We appreciate your willingness to lead your state delegations in this important combined effort to live our faith by raising the needs of the poor and the most vulnerable to members of Congress.

So often they are forgotten in the policy and budget debates. Your participation and leadership helps to give a voice to the voiceless on Capitol Hill.

Thank You



See you in February!

Brought to you by the
CSMG Hill Visits Committee:

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Tom Mulloy (USCCB), Tina Rodousakis (CRS),
Terry Thames (USCCB) and Chris West (CRS)

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