

APRIL 2, 2014

HOW TO TALK TO CONGRESS 101

PRESENTED BY:

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TWO HOUSES OF CONGRESS:

U.S. House of Representatives

435 voting Members of Congress (MOCs)
apportioned by population (*Delegates and Commissioners
Participate But Do Not Vote.*)

2 – Year Terms

Rules – Majority will always prevail!



TWO HOUSES OF CONGRESS:

U.S. Senate

Two per each of 50 States = 100

6 Year Terms

Rules - Deference to minority.

Filibuster.



CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE STRUCTURE

Senator/Representative



Chief of Staff/Administrative Assistant (AA)*



Legislative Director (LD)*



Legislative Assistants (LA)*



Legislative Correspondent(s) (LC)



Staff Assistant(s)



District Director



District Staff

(Case workers; Field Reps; Scheduler)



WHY ADVOCATE?



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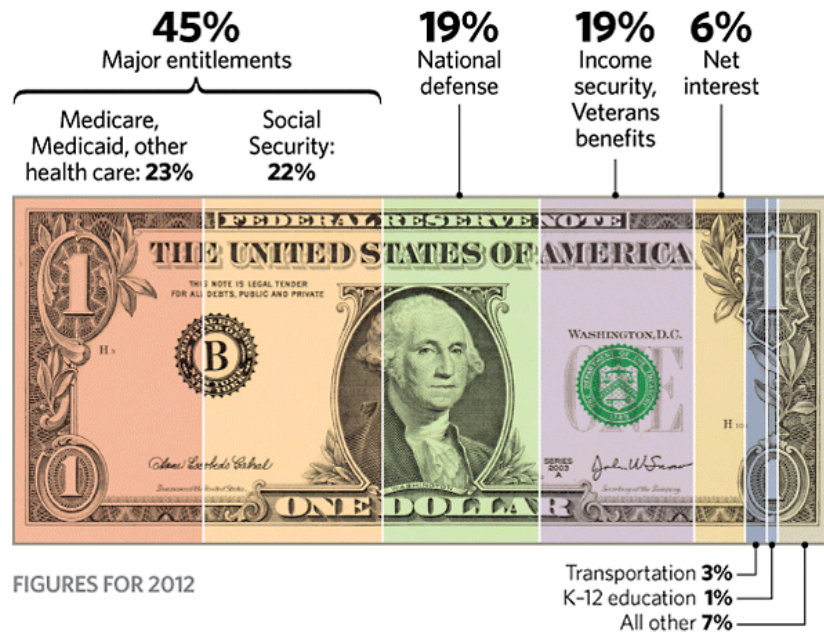
- Duty as a U.S. citizen, but especially as an advocate for your people
- Congress won't know what issues are important to you if you don't tell them!
- Most Members of Congress *want* to help you



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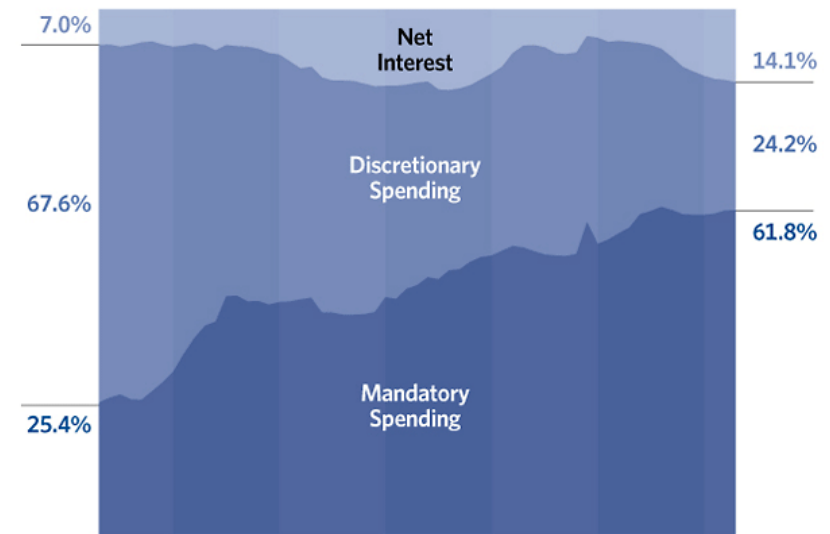
- Federal Pie is getting smaller and smaller. More voices trying to be heard on the same things

Where Did Your Tax Dollar Go?



As Entitlements Grow, the Discretionary Share of the Budget Falls to Less Than One-Quarter

SHARE OF TOTAL OUTLAYS



WHERE CAN YOU ADVOCATE?

Pillars of Advocacy



Legislative

Political

Regulatory

WHO SHOULD YOU BE TALKING TO?



YOUR OWN SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES

- **You should always establish a good relationship with your own Senators and Representatives**
 - Invite them to events you have including council meetings; cultural events; facility tours
 - Make sure you know the district staff in your area.
 - Call local office to set up meetings
- Visit www.senate.gov or www.house.gov to find your representatives
- It is recommended to know all representatives from your state – especially if they are on the relevant committees

SDPI SITE VISITS

- Site visits for SDPI have been successful in creating advocates for the renewal of the program
- Visit NIHB website for site visit tool kit for your SDPI program
- Helps to create a lasting impression of the positive things going on in your community
 - Congressman can go from ally to advocate
- Doesn't have to be SDPI – can be anything!



WHAT SHOULD YOU BE SAYING?



TEN RULES FOR SPEAKING WITH CONGRESS

1. Arrive on time: Too early or too late could leave a bad impression
2. Arrive with some knowledge of the Member: What Committees are they on? How long in Congress? How close was their last election?
3. Introduce yourself: Who are you and why you are important. Brag a little about cool things your Tribe/ health facility is doing at home.
4. Leave personal Politics at home: This should go without saying.
5. Get to the point: Don't spend a lot of time beating around the bush. Your overview and ask should be no more than 3 minutes
 1. Be prepared to answer questions
 2. Offer your assistance to provide more information or to talk further
 3. Never come empty handed – bring some information to leave behind

TEN RULES FOR SPEAKING WITH CONGRESS

6. Assume the staffer/ Member doesn't know anything about AI/ANs: Make sure to explain why you are not an "Entitlement" and why federal trust responsibility is critical.

7. Make it personal: Make sure to emphasize why this "ask" should matter at home. Will people lose services? Will there be jobs lost? What will happen to the community?

8. Who in Congress is also working on this issue: Is it bi-partisan? Who can they contact if they want more information?

9. Always Follow-up with Thank You email.

10. Tell NIHB!: Contact Caitrin McCarron Shuy – cshuy@nihb.org or (202) 507-4085.

WRITE!

- **If you can't get a meeting with a Congressional Office at home or in the district write a letter from your Tribe**
- **Email is the best way – Find out who handles the issue at the staff level and send directly.**
- **Organize a letter-writing campaign**
- **Pass a Tribal Resolution**



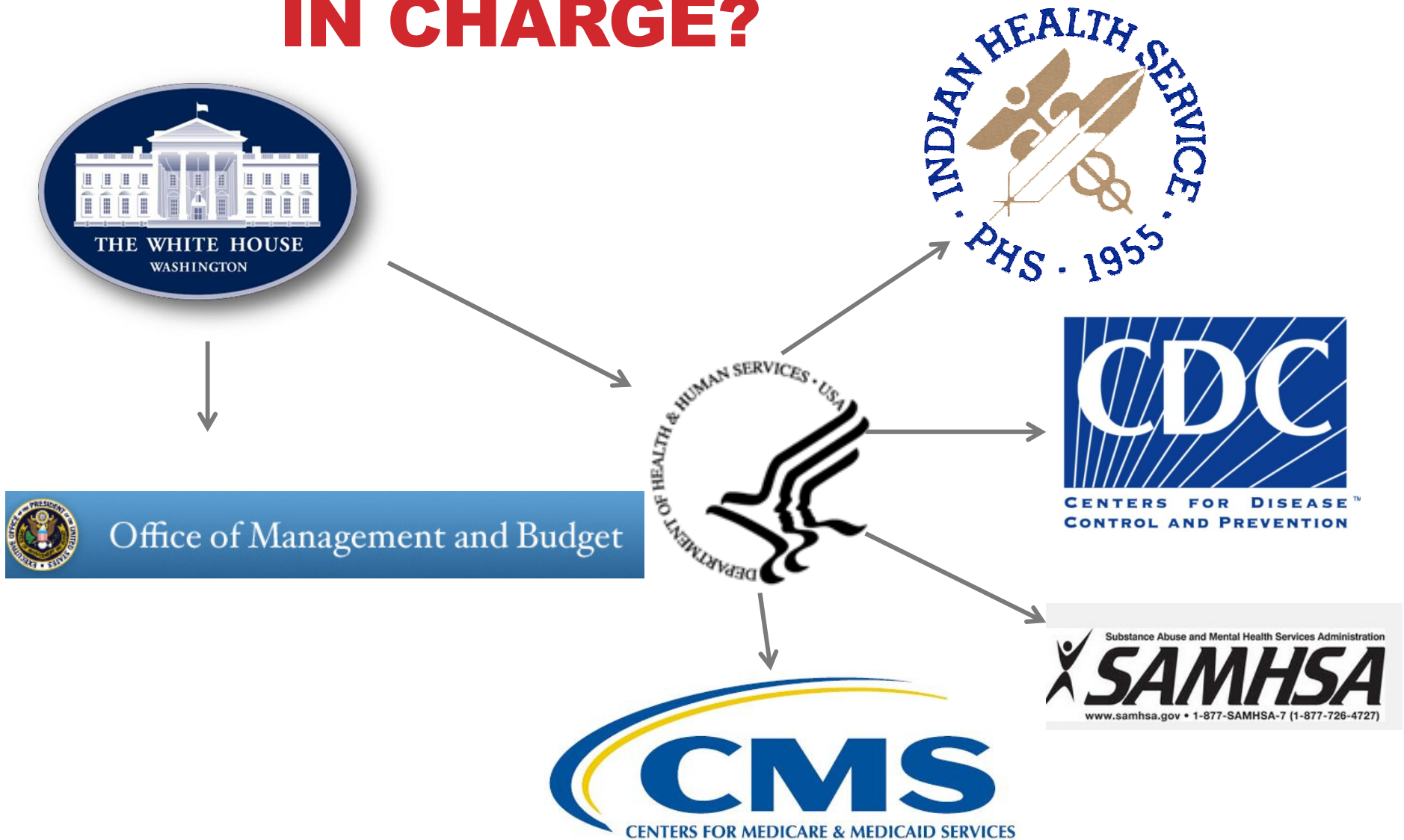
WHAT ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATION?



REGULATORY BUREAUCRACY



REGULATORY WHO'S IN CHARGE?



REGULATIONS, REGULATIONS, REGULATIONS....



FEDERAL REGISTER
The Daily Journal of the United States Government

- 20,000 pages of ACA-related regulations courtesy of the Office of Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY).

TRIBAL CONSULTATION

- **Key opportunity to have your voice heard in the Administration**
- **Use the opportunity to talk about key concerns with government officials.**



CONCLUSION

- It is critical to talk to Congress in order to get things done
- If you know the system, you can make it work to your advantage
- Always work with others if possible.
- Work all angles – executive and legislative
- Questions?
 - Caitrin McCarron Shuy
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 - cshuy@nihb.org
 - (202) 507-4085 (office)
 - (202) 374-9966 (cell)

