

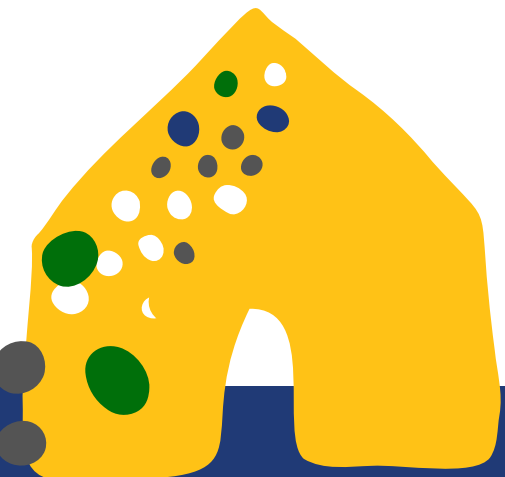
Insider Information: How to Make the Most of a Legislative Visit



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Education

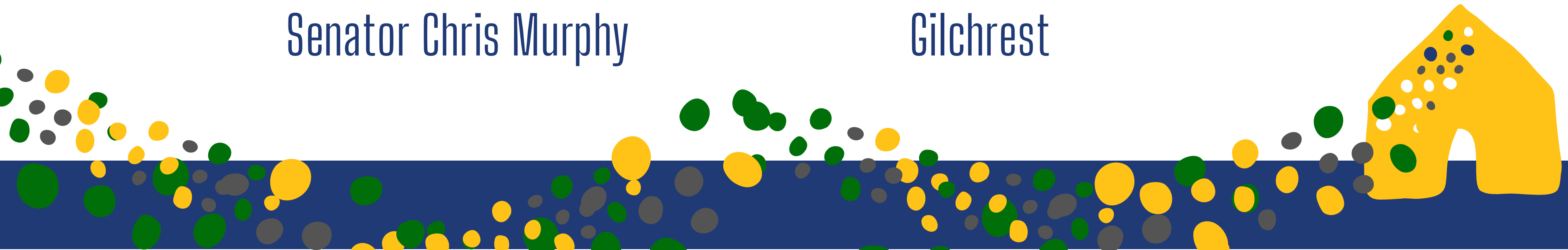


Connecticut
Department of
HOUSING



Insider Information: How to Make the Most of a Legislative Visit

- Emma King, Access Community Action Agency
- Erin McBride, Office of U.S. Senator Chris Murphy
- State Representative Eleni Kavros DeGraw
- State Representative Jillian Gilchrest



MAXIMIZING IMPACT WITH LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

Emma King, LMSW

Vice President/CPO
ACCESS Community Action Agency

Erin McBride

Senior Outreach Assistant
U.S. Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT)

A MEETING WITH A LEGISLATOR IS JUST A MEETING WITH A LEGISLATOR...

...RIGHT?

How to maximize your impact when
conducting legislative advocacy.



GET TO KNOW US

CHRIS
MURPHY



EMMA KING

Vice President/Chief
Program Officer



About Me

Former Deputy District Director for
U.S. Congressman Joe Courtney (CT-
2)

Campaign Manager for Courtney for
Congress (2012)

Got the Congressman trapped by a
miniature horse.



ERIN McBRIDE

Senior Outreach Assistant



About Me

Current Senior Outreach Assistant
for U.S. Senator Chris Murphy

Member of the Board of Directors
for the Disabilities Network of
Eastern CT.

GET TO KNOW US



**REP. JILLIAN
GILCHREST**

Serving West Hartford

Elected in 2018

Serves on Appropriations, Public Health and Judiciary

Has extensive experience advocating for women's health and safety issues through work at CCDAV & NARAL

Graduate of UCONN School of Social Work



**REP. ELENI KAVROS
DEGRAW**

Serving Avon, Canton

Elected in 2020

Serves on Appropriations, Public Health, and chairs Planning and Development

has extensive community organizing experience serving on Boards of CCEH, CT Foodshare

Graduate of James Madison University and the Campaign School at Yale.

A MEETING WITH A LEGISLATOR IS JUST A MEETING WITH A LEGISLATOR...

...RIGHT?

How to maximize your impact when
conducting legislative advocacy.





What to Expect Today

How to Engage with Legislators

Managing Expectations

Preparation

Maximizing Time

Navigating the Press

Effective Follow-Up

What is the benefit of Legislative outreach?



**Hint, it has nothing to do with legislation
or policy**

ITS ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS.



Who are we talking about?

CONGRESS - 2 YEAR TERMS
US SENATE - 6 YEAR TERMS

Rep.
John Larson
CT-1

Rep. Joe Courtney
CT-2

Rep. Rosa DeLauro
CT-3

Rep.
Jim Himes
CT-4

Rep. Jahana
Hayes
CT-5

Senator Richard
Blumenthal

Senator Chris
Murphy

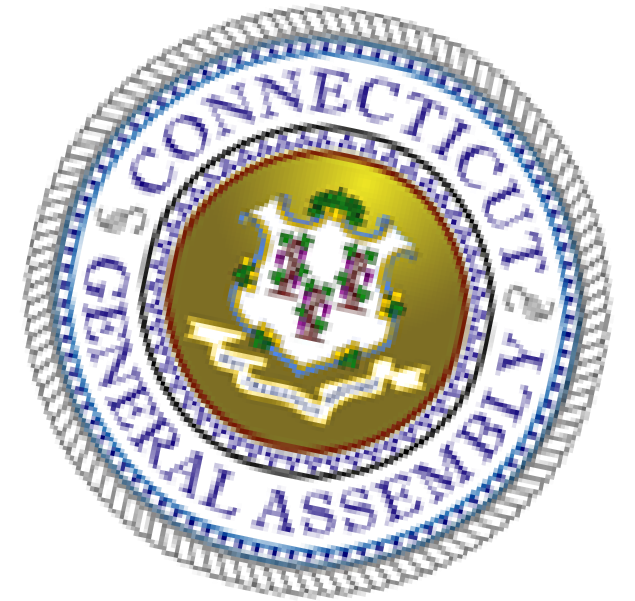




**151 House
Members**
2 YEAR TERMS

CT General Assembly

[Find Your Legislator](#)



36 Senate Districts

2 YEAR TERMS



Re-Districting & District Size

- Redistricting occurs after each US Census, in which new population data can change district maps.
- Districts change so that there are approximately the same number of residents in each district.
- House Districts - 23,719 residents
- Senate Districts - 99,280 residents
- Congressional Districts - 721,188 residents

The Secret Superheroes

District Staff



- **Constituent Services Staff** - assist individuals and families with issues they are having with federal agencies
- **Communications/Outreach Staff** - work with nonprofits, municipalities and other coalitions to understand district issues, priorities
- **District Scheduler** - manages and coordinates district events
- **State/District Director** - oversees all state operations
- **Staff Assistants** - supports office, answers phones, handles district mail

Washington DC Staff



- **Legislative Assistants** - support policy and legislative efforts in a specific area or committee
- **Legislative Director** - oversees legislative agenda for Member, works to advance legislative priorities
- **Communications Directors** - handles media requests, press releases and directs media strategy
- **Legislative Correspondents** - handles all the MAIL and coordinates with Leg. Assistants to issue responses.
- **Scheduler** - coordinate all DC meetings, visits and committee duties
- **Chief of Staff/Deputy Chief of Staff** - oversees operations of both state and DC; oversees legislative agenda and priorities, acts a liaison Fed. Agencies and branches of Gov't



The Secret Superheroes

State House



- Staffing is coordinated why House Republicans or House Democrats.
- Staff positions per rep may vary & staff can work for multiple members
- Members who hold committee leadership positions may have additional staff



House Republicans



House Democrats

State Senate



- Staffing is coordinated why Senate Democrats or Senate Republicans
- Members who hold committee leadership positions may have additional staff



Senate Republicans



Senate Democrats

Forming the Meeting Request

Setting your PURPOSE.

- Is this meeting request about your agency or is it about the Legislator?
- What role do you want the Legislator to play?
- Have you been asked to set up meetings by a statewide org or trade group?

Ideas to consider

- General Agency Visit
- Policy Request
- Specific Bill lobby
- Local issue/Challenge
- New Program Launch
- Grant/Contract Announcement
- Agency Event

(REMEMBER ADVOCACY STARTS WITH A RELATIONSHIP).

The biggest WHY of 2025 - Funding Cuts

- **Program funding is being terminated, rescinded or reduced.**
 - Visit would highlight how the termination of services would impact community/clients/staff
 - Allows for engagement with staff & clients (if appropriate)
- **Legislators may actually reach out to YOU asking to visit or discuss pending cuts**
 - Rep Courtney called Access to participate in a roundtable discussion on cuts to emergency food assistance programs with Foodshare

If a legislator invites you anywhere - **SHOW UP. EVERYTIME**

When to request a meeting

UNITED STATES SENATE 119th Congress, 1st Session 2025

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S
1 2 3 4	1	1
5 6 7 8 9 10 11	2 3 4 5 6 7 8	2 3 4 5 6 7 8
12 13 14 15 16 17 18	9 10 11 12 13 14 15	9 10 11 12 13 14 15
19 20 21 22 23 24 25	16 17 18 19 20 21 22	16 17 18 19 20 21 22
26 27 28 29 30 31	23 24 25 26 27 28	23 24 25 26 27 28 29
30 31		
APRIL	MAY	JUNE
1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6 7 8 9 10 11 12	4 5 6 7 8 9 10	8 9 10 11 12 13 14
13 14 15 16 17 18 19	11 12 13 14 15 16 17	15 16 17 18 19 20 21
20 21 22 23 24 25 26	18 19 20 21 22 23 24	22 23 24 25 26 27 28
27 28 29 30	25 26 27 28 29 30 31	29 30
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
1 2 3 4 5	1 2	1 2 3 4 5 6
6 7 8 9 10 11 12	3 4 5 6 7 8 9	7 8 9 10 11 12 13
13 14 15 16 17 18 19	10 11 12 13 14 15 16	14 15 16 17 18 19 20
20 21 22 23 24 25 26	17 18 19 20 21 22 23	21 22 23 24 25 26 27
27 28 29 30 31	24 25 26 27 28 29 30	28 29 30
31		
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
1 2 3 4	1	1 2 3 4 5 6
5 6 7 8 9 10 11	2 3 4 5 6 7 8	7 8 9 10 11 12 13
12 13 14 15 16 17 18	9 10 11 12 13 14 15	14 15 16 17 18 19 20
19 20 21 22 23 24 25	16 17 18 19 20 21 22	21 22 23 24 25 26 27
26 27 28 29 30 31	23 24 25 26 27 28 29	28 29 30 31
30		

Red dates = Senate not in session
○ = Federal Holiday

Senate and House

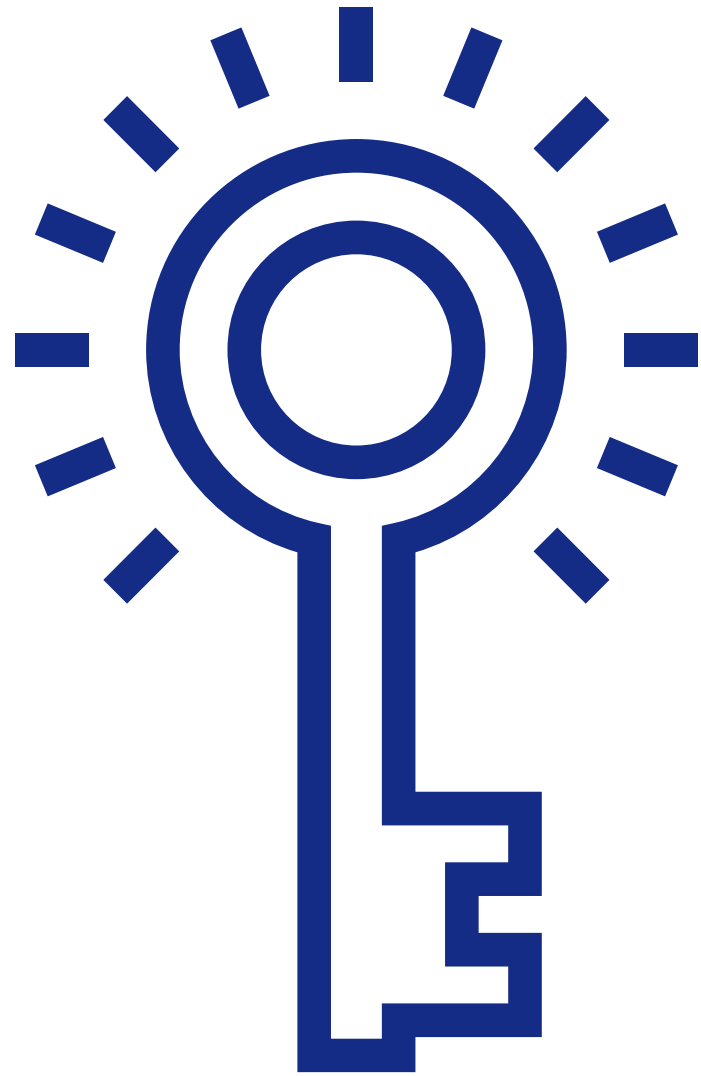
- Follow a pre-set (loosely) schedule set by the majority party in both chambers. The schedule does not always line up & can change if legislative requirements cannot be met.
- District Work Periods - when members are in district for longer lengths of time, typically a week.
- Both House & Senate are traditionally home for the ENTIRE month of August

CT General Assembly

- CT General Assembly is a PART TIME legislature
- Sessions run from Feb-May (even years) or January to June (odd years - budget)
- Special Sessions can occur

CGA Members are not always full time legislators - many maintain full or part time employment.

Remember the Superheroes?



**Don't Discredit a meeting with
Legislative or State Staff!**

**They are your KEY to relationship
building!**

Especially for policy request or specific bill lobbying.

Many times have the most update to date information coming out of committees AND they are
entrenched in these policy issues

ALL DAY EVERY DAY.



Be Flexible!



Offer a range of Dates

Check the legislative calendar BEFORE reaching out to staff, and offer AS MANY DATES AS POSSIBLE.



Offer Virtual or In Office Visit

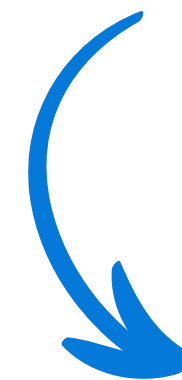
A visit to a legislators district office or a virtual meeting is a great option when a quick turnaround is needed.



Cancellations Happen



Cancellations happen, sometimes same day, and staff try to reschedule. Stay in contact and offer as many dates as possible



For Events - Schedule around

If you want a legislator to make remarks or present awards START with contacting the office and request available dates

Use Website Scheduling Requests



Rep. Larson (CT-1)



Rep. Courtney (CT-2)



Rep. DeLauro (CT-3)



Rep. Himes (CT-4)



Rep. Hayes (CT-5)



Senator Murphy



Senator
Blumenthal

Ok - Meeting is Scheduled - Now the REAL work begin!



The meeting BEFORE the meeting?

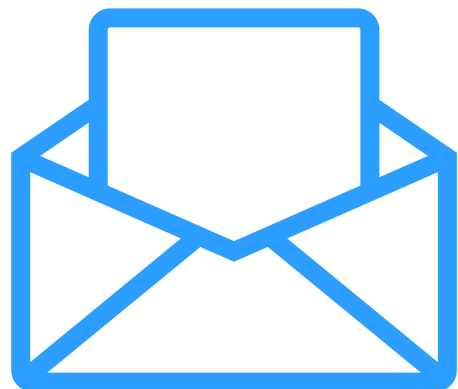
See if legislative or state staff are interested in meeting or site visit prior to plan visit/meeting with legislator.
(remember RELATIONSHIPS)



Length of Visit

Plan for a meeting or visit of 45 minutes.

Legislators run late, they just do. Try NOT to be the reason they are late to the NEXT event.

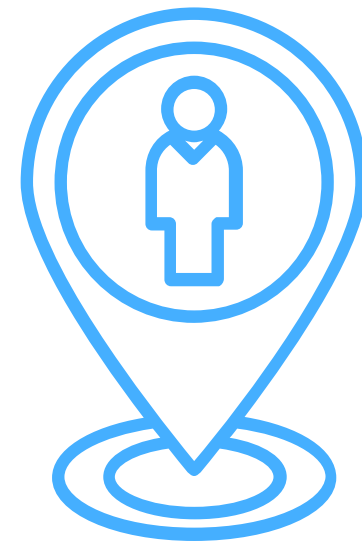


Invite List

Who is going to be attending? Know FULL names, titles and connection to organization

Remember your PURPOSE

There is a thing as TOO many people!



Involving Program Participants

Let staff know if the visit will include talking with or meeting with program participants.

Plan for extra time for these conversation so that all participants can be treated with dignity & respect

Over Prepare!

Meeting Agenda



- Please have one. PLEASE PLEASE!
- Map out EXACTLY what is going to happen, topics you would like covered and specifics you would like to highlight
- Compile any Data, research or other important information that ties to your PURPOSE
- Compile agency history AND program history
- Know where the money comes from! How is your agency funded? *Tie this to the level of legislator*
- Prepare success stories or examples!

Do you want Media Coverage?



Press Release v. Media Advisory

Press Release - sent out AFTER an event is complete, provides summary of event, quotes, and photos

- communications staff may ask to proof any press release sent out

Media Advisory - sent out BEFORE an event occurs, includes an invitation to press to attend and cover the event.

- Some federal delegation members send out an advisory for an entire days worth of event so the media knows where they will be.

Check with legislator or their staff BEFORE DOING ANYTHING
MEDIA RELATED.



Messaging In Current Moment

How do we have a productive conversation when everything is burning?

- Stay grounded in the current moment.
- Highlight program outcomes/impact to individuals/communities.
- THANK legislators for their support
- ASK what **they** may need to support their advocacy
- What isn't working?

How do we effectively advocate for programs or policies that are and aren't working while understanding the realities of government right now? Do you have solutions or ideas?



How do we engage with legislators who haven't always supported homeless response or affordable housing initiatives?

- Be open minded. I KNOW.
- Ask questions, Ask them about their concerns/issues
- Highlight the program outcomes/impact to community - these are their constituents as well!
- Keep inviting them to things, even if they don't attend!

How can we mobilize and combine efforts with partner organizations to make our work even more impactful?

How can we bridgebuild?

After the Meeting!



Send along photos

**Follow-up on any “promises” made -
could be documents, information, etc.**

Update office if anything changes!

STAY IN CONTACT.

Stay In Touch!

CHRIS
MURPHY



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860-450-7400

**“POWER CONCEDES
NOTHING WITH OUT
A DEMAND. IT
NEVER DID AND IT
NEVER WILL”**

Frederick Douglass

Thank you!

Thank You!

For any questions email info@cceh.org

Visit our website cceh.org

