

Researching Policymakers



The most effective way to get policymakers to care about your issue is to illustrate that one of their values, interests, or priorities is connected to it (or all three!). By creating this “bridge,” you can show them how acting on the issue you care about helps them to accomplish their goals. The following tips and worksheet will walk you through how to find common ground with any policymaker.

At the end of your research, you should be able to answer the following questions:

- What are the policymaker’s priorities and interests?
- What are some possible shared interests and priorities that will allow you to show how acting on the issue you care about helps them to accomplish their goals?

Facts about the policymaker to know:

- What are some key economic and cultural interests of the geographic area they represent?
 - For example, maintaining a beautiful coastline is crucial for the important tourism industry in Florida.
- What was their prior (or current in some cases) occupation?
- What committees do they sit on?
 - Some policymakers sit on committees that reflect their constituents’ interests and build up expertise about the issues within the committee’s jurisdiction, giving them a stronger chance of advancing legislation and issues that matter to them.
- What caucuses are they members of (applicable to Members of Congress)?
 - Caucuses are informal organizations that members participate in to demonstrate interest or leadership in an issue.
- What bills or policies have they sponsored (written) or co-sponsored (support)?
- What are some things that their constituents care about?

Sources of Information:

- Explore the policymaker’s website.
- Find the legislator’s stances on legislation and their voting record.
 - www.Congress.gov;
 - www.Govtrack.us for Members of Congress
- Look at the legislator’s social media account for information on their recent priorities and interests.
 - Facebook; Twitter; Instagram
- Connect with your institution’s government relations team.
 - Your institution likely has a person who handles government relations, who may be able to provide helpful insights, connections, and information for you.

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POLICYMAKER #1

Name:		Party	
Year First Elected:		Hometown:	
Office Held:			
Committees (if applicable):	3 Issues Listed on Website:		
Previous/Current Occupation:			
Key Regional Economic and Cultural Interests:			
Policies They Support:			
3 Issues Their Constituents Care About:			
Possible Shared Interests/Priorities:			

POLICYMAKER #2

Name:		Party	
Year First Elected:		Hometown:	
Office Held:			
Committees (if applicable):	3 Issues Listed on Website:		
Previous/Current Occupation:			
Key Regional Economic and Cultural Interests:			
Policies They Support:			
3 Issues Their Constituents Care About:			
Possible Shared Interests/Priorities:			