



Washington, DC Staff

What They Do

Washington, D.C., staff are less focused on casework and specific local issues and more focused on legislation. They are ready and willing to answer constituent's questions about specific legislative proposals. In general, if you want to express your opinion or learn the Member's opinion on a particular federal issue that is broad in scope, call or write the Washington, D.C. office. You can also contact the district office, but in many cases your correspondence will be forwarded to Washington.

Who's Who

Staff Assistant -- Most House offices have one **staff assistant**. Most Senate offices have at least two. They handle the front desk duties, which include answering phones, greeting visitors, sorting mail, and coordinating tours. In many offices, these individuals will handle a few policy issues as well.

D.C. Scheduler/Executive Assistant -- If you are going to be in Washington, D.C. and want to meet your representative or senator, contact the **D.C. scheduler** (who is sometimes called the **Executive Assistant**). Just be prepared for a little chaos. Schedulers receive dozens of meeting requests a day. Most House Members are scheduled with back-to-back meetings and votes from about 8 am to 9 or 10 pm every weekday, and also have four to five hours of meetings both weekend days. There simply is not enough time in the day for a Member of Congress to meet with everyone who requests a meeting. That said, if you live in the district or state that the representative or senator represents, and want to discuss a substantive policy issue, you always should be able to meet with someone on the staff.

Legislative Assistant (LA) -- If you want to talk, either in person or on the phone, about a particular policy issue, ask for the **legislative assistant** who handles that issue. Legislative assistants handle the bulk of the policy work in a policymaker's office. A House office usually will have two to four LAs and a Senate office will have from three to as many as twelve (depending upon the state's population).

Legislative Director (LD) -- In some cases, the person who handles your issue may also be the **legislative director** who, in addition to handling policy issues, also oversees the legislative staff. There is usually just one legislative director in each policymaker's office.

Legislative Correspondent (LC) -- You may also be referred to a **legislative correspondent** who, in addition to drafting letters in response to constituents' comments and questions, also generally handles a few legislative issues. Most House offices have one or two LC's. Senators have three to five, depending on their state's population.

Press Secretary/Spokesperson/Communications Director -- If you want to include something about the representative or senator's views in a newsletter, or have questions related to the press operations of the office, ask for the **press secretary**. This individual is responsible for fielding all calls from the media and is often the spokesperson for the office. House offices usually have one designated press person. Senate offices have two to five.

Chief of Staff (CoS)/Administrative Assistant (AA) -- The **chief of staff** or **AA** oversees the entire operation. The chief of staff may sometimes handle a few policy issues, but generally his or her time is spent managing the office.