

Live captioning by Ai-Media

MAUREEN JOHNSON:

Welcome, everyone! We are going to get started soon. Please feel free to introduce yourself in the chat.

SPEAKER:

What would you like us to say?

MAUREEN JOHNSON:

You can say what program you are coming from. How the weather is where you are coming from, right now in Maryland it is raining. Let's get started! Hello and welcome to the 2022 disability policy seminar orientation and policy education 101. My name is Maureen Johnson and I'm a specialist at AUCD.

We would like to thank you for joining us today. Before we begin, I would like to address logistical details. Because of the number of participants, please mute yourself throughout the meeting. You can submit questions at any time through the chat box in your webinar toolbar. There will be time for questions and all questions will be read aloud to accommodate all attendees.

We have CART captioner name available and if you would like to access it, please click the cc button to access subtitles. If you would like to make them bigger or smaller, click on the CC button again to select settings. We also have an American sign language interpreter in the session. To pin their video, please hover over your screen and select the three top right and pin their video. You can also adjust speaker preferences.

This meeting is being recorded and will be available shortly. We will also have captions from the captioner. Thank you for joining us today. Sure our presenters for today. We have Cindy Smith, AUCD's director of public policy. Denise Rozell, director of policy innovation. Liz Weintraub, our senior advocacy specialist, Ellie Potts, R AUCD emerging leader in turn.

As well as Tatiana Perilla, are other AUCD leaders in turn. I will pass to Cindy to start us off.

CINDY SMITH:

Welcome everyone, thank you for joining us today. We've Artie done introductions, we will talk about how the federal government operates and how a bill becomes a law. We will be joined from two speakers from Capitol Hill who talk about Congress and how they are prioritizing and tips and tricks for meeting with policymakers.

We will also talk about AUCD's policy priorities for 2022, the difference between educating

policymakers versus lobbying and what to expect at the disability policy seminar. Inc. you so much for joining us, I look forward to your questions at the end.

LIZ WEINTRAUB:

As Cindy said, I'm really excited to see everybody here. So thank you for being here. One of my slides is why your voice matters! You have expertise and passion. Your work and life will be impacted by policymakers decisions, whether you are a self advocate person with this disability, you have expertise.

Your vote can hold policymakers accountable. Policymakers work for you and for me. If you don't speak up, someone else will speak for you. Educating policymakers and advocacy is the key to making the change that you want. That you want!

So the next slide. Leadership as LEND Trainees, research, policy and practice work to gather to create system change. When we better understand how policy works, then we can better educate policymakers and how policy impacts practice.

Sometimes it is good to share data policy that sounds good on paper does not work in real life. We all have the responsibility to help practice improved. I should also say that I forgot to say that I am a LEND Trainee from 2019. It was a great experience. The next slide.

This is how the ADA came about. The anniversary was two weeks ago, I think it was on 12 March. This is how people with disabilities can create policy change. The crawl happened and the anniversary was two weeks ago. People with disabilities wanted to get to the capital because the capital is our house.

They refer to it as the people's house. People with disabilities could not get up the steps because it was not accessible to people with disabilities. Either people who use wheelchairs or people who use other assisted step technology.

So the ADA was signed into law on July 20 in 1990. -- July 26, 1990. But I think it is coming up on the 33rd year this July. So it is very exciting! The ADA is a civil rights law that works to create equal opportunity to live and work in the community. It came about in 1990 and the 65 – the civil rights law in 1965 and 19, like, 19...

They realized that people with disabilities were not included so they work to include people with disabilities so... the next slide. And, we have three branches of government. On the executive branch, the left and the legislative branch of Congress in the judicial branch. I would like to share a story of how those three branches all work together.

With the Cavanaugh case and actually now we also have a vacancy on the Supreme Court, so the president from the Cavanaugh case was president Trump and he had that under a nominating someone to be on the Supreme Court. Then, there was a hearing in the Senate and the house.

The Senate needs to approve the nominee. And right now, that is what the justice is doing right now. And here if Congress approves, if everyone says that they are approved, then they can sit on the justice. So Cavanaugh got approved.

He is now sitting. So the next slide.

DENISE ROZELL:

I think that is where I jump in, Liz. And with is too modest to say this but part of the reason we are using the Cavanaugh model is because with actually testified. Go back one slide for me. It is a nice way of seeing how all branches of government where he got there. Because he lives testified-- Liz Weintraub testified to Santa in opposition to the Cavanaugh nomination because of some decisions he made about whether or not women with disabilities could make healthcare decisions for themselves.

And it was great, Mike! When he was of his, he moved to the judicial branch. I say this to a lot of people, if you have not seen Liz Weintraub's testimony, I would recommend you go Google it. Google it, pull it up and watch it because it is a good example truthfully of how the three branches of government work together. Next slide!

We will talk mostly today about two of the branches. The president and administration and the legislative branch. It is important to know because each of the branches has a job. It is important to know who everyone is and what they do and why they are important to us.

So the president and administration are one branch. What do they do? They can suggest laws but they do not pass them. They can suggest them. They can suggest changes of laws to Congress. He appoints, he in this case but I hope one day it is a he. But right now, he appoints heads of federal agencies.

Meaning the head of the human services department, who frankly has to do with the internal Child health Bureau and where all of the work you are doing sets. So he appoints the heads of those departments and the Department of Education, for instance. Where a lot of the education decisions sets. He appoints federal judges.

Both to the Supreme Court and the rest of the federal judiciary. The administration rights rules and regulations for how the laws actually work. You, I am sure, have been looking at what some of those

regulations are. They are regulations that cover education, that cover employment for people with disabilities.

That is where, the administration are the ones who write those accommodations after they pass the bill. The administration enforces the laws. If there is a violation of the law – a federal law, that comes up in the administration and that is why it is important to know who is in those agencies and to represent that they are.

The president obviously is the one who signs or vetoes bills. So bills are passed and the president of the administration either approves or doesn't. They will sign it or veto it. Then with executive orders, there have been a number of executive orders issued in the Biden administration.

Including one early in the administration around equity. So those are things that can be issued out of the administration, they do not need congressional action. There are a number of those who have been issued through this administration and around the federal government in particular and how the federal government is going to act. The early one is around equity.

CINDY SMITH:

I want to speak before you move on, one of the things he mentioned that is very different than the state and federal level is the present ability to veto. You can't veto an entire piece of legislation or assign an entire piece of legislation which is different than you are doing for state-level. In those cases, a government does have the ability to cross off-line.

This comes in when we talk about the process, it either comes in budget and they sign everything which is why it takes longer to negotiate at times or you can do it again.

DENISE ROZELL:

That is a really good point, Cindy. I should have set up front and just make clear, this is all federal software talking about. For those of you who are active at state levels, states work differently. In some states, the president or administration or governor has a lot of power. The legislature has very little power.

In some states, the legislature has a lot of power but the government does not have a lot of power. It is a figurehead. It depends on the state. Sure the federal level, we try. The theory is that all three branches are equal and coexist, judiciary, president and Congress.

That is another thinker member thing that is different at the state level. Congress, this is somewhat different than what happens. I will give you this one and examples from the state of how it is different.

The Senate has two members from each state. It doesn't matter how big your state, small, what your population is. You get two members.

Those members are elected statewide and currently, they served for six year terms. It is a rolling reelection. Every two years, 1/3 of the Senate is up for reelection or election.

Something to know now – the current makeup of the Senate, you probably hear a lot about this. They talk about it as being 50-50, meaning there are 50 Democrats and 50 Republicans. There are 48, Democrats to independence – and Angus came from Maine, Bernie Sanders came from Vermont, and they are both (indiscernible).

The tiebreaker vote is always by the vice president. If you have been reading the news, watching any news in the last year and 1/2, you have noticed that they talk about that a lot. It is really hard to get 50 members voting in favor of something. You have to get at least 50 and then in some cases, 60. Cindy can explain that later.

In the House, it is based on the population. Your number of congresspeople is based on the population of your state. In Alaska, Representative Don Young, who is the senior member of the House Republican caucus, passed away recently. There's going to be a new reelection to replace him. There's only one member of Congress from Alaska.

There are a lot of members of Congress from California based off their population.

Population is redone every 10 years, based on the census.

This year, if you're reading the news, you are seeing a lot of census-based – information coming out on districts, etc. Those numbers of how many people are going to be elected to the House from anyone state is based on the census. Currently there are 210 Republicans, 222 Democrats, three vacancies. Cindy, does that count representative Smith?

There may be four. In any case, there are a few open.

They serve two-year terms. They are elected every two years.

Since I live in the area around the District of Columbia, District of Columbia and the US territories do not have voting representation. They have work that gets done, but they are nonvoting. Maybe again, someday that will change. I know my friends from the territory in particular, and DC would wish that it would.

Congress is of the branch we will be talking about. States again, looks different. Many states also have – Nebraska, does not. It depends on how those houses are creative. Whether it is the same number, proportional by population, how those houses work, depends on the state. In some cases, they are called the assembly, Senate and the House. They are all different.

House of Delegates...

It is different for your states. This is how your Congress works. When we are talking to about looking up your congresspeople, this is what we mean.

If someone tells you to look at your state legislators, those are people who are meeting in your state capitals.

Next slide – I think this flips to Liz.

**SPEAKER:**

this is a quick version and also a cool little video. I can think of many times over my career in DC, the first 10 years I was here And now coming back, where I see legislation that has been introduced every single Congress. In particular, four years later, coming back to DC, there are pieces of legislation there to work on.

Policy change at the federal level takes a long time to get done. How a bill becomes a law.

It can be introduced by either a senator or a representative or the same piece of legislation be introduced by both members in both the changers -- chambers at the same time. It is very different than working at the state level. A lot of times, you need to introduce a bill from one chamber first and then introduce it to the next chamber once it moves to the process.

Here in DC, you could do at the same time, if you would like to. It is then sent to a series of committees and subcommittees with a limited number of members. They are really the ones to make the edits to bills and look at them closely.

During a series of hearings and markups, to see what needs to be made, to improve or changes to be made to move through the legislative process. You see a lot of compromise happening here.

Either the House or Senate, once it makes it through the committee process, and it is successfully voted out of the committee, debates the bill on the floor either on the house of representatives of the U.S. Senate. There are a large number of rules that go into how a debate happens on the floor of the House or Senate. You will see in the news, but there is a what we call – filibuster – to go to the floor,

and to continue to talk. (audio issues)

But, also to style it in the U.S. Senate. The Senate typically needs 60 votes to move a piece of legislation into a filibuster. There are some things that could be done, like federal judges at the moment with only 50 V. This piece we will talk about in a little bit called budget reconciliation that only needs 50 votes.

Once it is debated, it is successfully passed on with either the house or the Senate. It moves to a conference committee and this is a committee when the House passes the piece of legislation, they will have their edits and the Senate is going to have theirs. They will come together as a conference committee to work out what the differences are between the house and the Senate version of the bill.

Once a day approve a compromise, the Senate can come to agree ends, it goes back to the two chambers to vote on the final piece of legislation and it eventually gets sent to the president to either Santella or veto it. The president vetoes it? The process restarts again.

Two other important things to note. There are two different types of federal legislation. We have authorizing legislation. This -- creates or revises federal policies or programs. The individuals with disabilities education act, Americans with disabilities act, then you also have appropriations legislation which is done separately. This is the legislation that funds the federal government in its programs.

This is the one thing that Congress must do on a yearly basis. They must, by September 30, every year, pass 13 different appropriation bills.

So they can find the federal government as of October 1.

What is important to know that you need both types of legislation to create a new program at the state level and to have it operate. There many federal programs in particular, and we sell and affordable care act today, and there are many programs that get authorizing legislation.

Congress never really appropriates funding to those programs. You need both to happen in order to have a program operate at the state level.

Maureen, have our speakers joined us yet?

MAUREEN JOHNSON:

I do not see our speakers here yet.

CINDY SMITH:

Let's continue on. Next slide, I will talk about the budget process first. (audio issues) the annual federal budget process. As you heard me say, the federal fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30, each year. It is different from most states, because they run from July 1 to June 30.

When we begin the annual budget process, the president submits his proposal to Congress. The president will then submit his proposal this coming Monday to Congress.

It is a blueprint of what his requests are and how he wants to see different federal programs and agencies funded and how he wants to see the money flow into the states. Then it is up to Congress and to the House of the representatives and senates to first work together (audio issues) and to pass a joint budget resolution.

An agreement of what will be in the federal budget from Congress and approved by the deadline that needs to be approved by. Then the process moves forward. If they don't approve the budget resolution, the process still moves forward.

In April and May, we go through the process with the house and the Senate committees writing and enacting the 13 appropriation bills.

They have broken them up into 13 different bills that moves through Congress each year. Most of the programs that serve people with disabilities are in what we call "the labor health human services education and related agencies bill" they call it labor HHS for short.

Almost everything we care about for people with disabilities fall into that bill. As I said earlier, the president either signs or vetoes.

If this process is not completed by September 30, each year, then Congress has to pass what we call a continuing resolution. A continuing resolution continues to fund the federal government for a short period of time while Congress works to complete its work. You may have seen, two weeks ago, this year, Congress has been working on a series of short-term continuing resolutions while they work through the federal process. It is only about two weeks ago, that Congress finally finished its work on the 12 appropriation bills for this year.

They move through and have the president signed into law. Although it is 1/30 -- September 30th deadline, Congress can pass a continuing resolution for the bills.

Also, to know that there are two types of federal spending. There is discretionary spending that makes up one third of the annual federal budget, and this includes both spending for defense programs as well as non-defense programs. This is what we have to decide on, annually each year from October 1

through September 30.

On the other hand, two thirds of the federal budget is made up of what we call entitlement/mandatory spending. This is spending that goes on without having to go through the annual budget process. This is funding that we have the guarantees individuals for a specified level of benefits.

This isn't debated each year. It is part of the federal appropriation process.

Maureen, should be passed yet?

MAUREEN JOHNSON:

Yes, both of our speakers are here.

CINDY SMITH:

Excellent. Can you please turn off the recording? thank you so much to Michael and Sarah for joining us today. I am pleased to have the opportunity to introduce both of you. From a network's background, we are joined from -- by Michael McCormick who works in policy in Pennsylvania.

She recently held a similar position in the office of Senator Tom (Name) and the senior education advisor. Primary -- before joining his staff, he was a director here at AUCD and has served as a professor at the University of Delaware and was the director of the University Center for disability studies in Delaware.

Also joining us today is Sarah Mueller, labor and patients committee. Recently, he was a junior policy fellow on the same committee. Prior to joining, Sarah also worked at AUCD as a policy fellow. Before joining AUCD, he was one of you! He was also at the University Center for excellence at the Institute of disabilities at (Name) University.

Welcome to both of you and I will turn it over to you.

SPEAKER:

Thank you, I will ask you to do something first. Give us a little bit of framing. Cermak that would be great.

SPEAKER:

How you want us to talk and what you want us to talk about.

CINDY SMITH:

We were hoping that since you have been on both sides of this conversation, it is more of the big

picture and what Congress is focused on right now. Like the Supreme Court nomination. I also thought you could be very helpful on both sides of this.

You have been the advocates and are now working on Capitol Hill. Went tips and tricks would you recommend for our trainees as they prepare for the policy seminar and also think about doing translation of work, practice, being trainees for us. How do they go from practice to working in the policy level?

SPEAKER:

That is great, thank you for doing that. Sarah, do you want to jump off or do you want me to? What is your preference?

SPEAKER:

Sure, I can start and you can fill in all of the things that I will surely forget. Thank you for happiness, -- having us. As Cindy said, this work is special to me. I was a different trainee and it was a little bit different but I very much understand your experience and what you are bringing to hopefully next week's Hill meetings. I assume they are happening next week, Cindy. Is that right?

CINDY SMITH:

There happening virtually on Wednesday and some people will be attending in person now that you are able to do official business again. Other schools will still be doing virtually.

SPEAKER:

Got it, thank you. I can start with some of the things that we are focusing on especially at the help committee and the center. We are not really looking at working in a fashion on a number of fronts. Just a few weeks ago, we passed at a committee pandemic preparedness bill called the prevent act. Likely and mostly based off of lessons learned from the pandemic.

How we can improve our system and we wanted to make sure we included many things as it relates to folks with disabilities who have been disproportionately impacted. We were really happy to get that committee and we will be working to pass that into law.

The next major piece of bipartisan work that we are focusing on is a mental health package. Also because of the pandemic, we are painfully aware of the impact that this pandemic has had on people's mental health and the crisis that has emerged both at the individual level and our systems overall.

We are looking at a number of reauthorization. So existing programs that need to be updated is what reauthorization means. And also hopefully trying to, you know, we've in some things there that are result of things we have learned from the pandemic. That is underway and we welcome your expertise

in the mental health space.

I look forward to hearing more about some of the things that you will work on in research and out in the field. But those are two major things help -- happening at the help committee level. Globally, we are so focused very much on the administrations build back better plan.

We will see how that goes in the Senate and this past week we had a childcare hearing which is a major priority for chair Marie. And the huge part of the Build Back Better reconciliation. I will let Michael speak to the hearings this morning. But we are hosting hearings for the last few weeks on some of the major pillars about having the conversation around the importance of moving this reconciliation forth.

We are making huge social investments and part of that is childcare. Especially for children with disabilities. As well as adults with disabilities and older adults. I will stop there, Michael you can fill in what I missed and we can talk about the hill meetings and how those can be most effective.

**SPEAKER:**

Thanks, Sarah. And Sarah mentioned the administration's priorities in terms of social spending and social support, family support. So I just want to negate a rumor that effort is dead. It is not dead. My boss and Sarah's boss are both focusing on important components of that effort.

It may be called something different and look like a different package, but we are still working very hard. It is nice to work with Sarah in terms of the facts that are two bosses had shared caregiving and services focus on childcare.

So, they complement one another really nicely. Sarah mentioned that yesterday there was quite an extensive focus on childcare and early care and education which was great. Then this morning, Senator (Name) wear a helmet on community and services. Focusing on youth and adults with disabilities as well as older adults. And those services meetings.

If you look at Senate Bill 2210, that is the better jobs act and that is the structure to put in place the hundred and \$50 million investment in our community based services. With the goal of extending services and also improving compensation for the workforce and actually stabilizing the workforce.

Most of you, if you look into your states -- you know that the home care and home support services that are available are very, very fragile and desperately need a huge investment. That is the effort that both of our bosses are leaning heavily into.

My boss and Sarah's boss as well, they are making sure that they are increasing opportunities for employment of disability used and adults coming out of IDA services. But also, those who are already

out of those services. Senator Casey has a bill that will transform minimum-wage employers into competitive, integrated employers.

We just sat earlier, a little less than a week ago, the Department of Education announced a new grant program that will help do that as well.

Senator Casey also has a bill that will work on the employer's side where there are tax incentives to hire people and also make sure that there are tax incentives to take place as well in the workplace. And that the workplace is interpreted very broadly, it is not just the physical workplace. It is also the online workplace as well. Recognizing that a lot of us do much of our work online rather than in a physical office building or other physical setting.

So those are the two big policy pieces from my boss. He has a lot of other things like increasing the able account eligibility up to 46 years of age as well as a lot of law enforcement work to decrease the interaction between people with disabilities and law enforcement.

We know that people with disabilities are harmed during their interactions with law enforcement. And they disproportionately are shot and killed, unfortunately, during some of those interactions. Somewhere between 25 and 40% of shootings involved law-enforcement shootings and those involved somebody with some type of disability.

There is a slate of other things but I will stop there and we can talk a little bit about how to dive into what is the most effective thing to do when you are visiting and how to have a really good visit if that makes sense. We can do that transition.

CINDY SMITH:

That would be fantastic!

SPEAKER:

Sarah, do you want me to start or keep going?

SPEAKER:

Sure, I can start! So I think one of the things that I always emphasize when I have these discussions is that you all have incredible expertise and should be leaning on your expertise. So many of you are doing extensive research on a topic or have direct experience of implementing federal laws.

And supporting individuals and communities. So, I always say to couple your expertise with the story. But share it and back it up with the data. I think that delivery is a very powerful punch so you are humanizing the data but also providing the data to give us a better understanding of the bigger picture

of the story that you are trying to convey.

Michael, we can do that back and forth. What would you add to that?

SPEAKER:

I would say that is key, for sure. If we think about it from a research point of view, it is a qualitative and quantitative mixed method approach to things. I will tell they knew that just last week in a hearing, my boss had a witness, on to talk about when she acquired her disability and what he can do financially and what she can't do financially because of when she acquired that disability.

A spinal cord injury occurred at 28 years of age. And she cannot open unable account. So that means that she has to limit the hours that he works and how much money she saves. He cannot save for an accessible van. So because the policy is in place that limits her ability to actually plan for the future.

That story made a huge difference with our members on the committee. We have brought him lots of data before but it was the story that made the difference. But you need to pair those two things together. The other thing they always say to people is that this visit from the disability policies, you should visit as -- see it as a start.

Whoever your senators are or your Congressman or Congresswoman and the house they are presenting, you should be touching base with them a few times a year. Bring them information, bring them stories. It does not have to be, you know, in person. Certainly you do not have to come to Washington every time.

But you want to become a known entity and develop a relationship with them so you can call on them. It works the other way. When I need information about the effect of a certain policy on southwestern Pennsylvania, I want to be able to call someone up from the land in Pittsburgh. Or I want to call somebody up from Philadelphia and ask them specifically about that.

So you should become known partners with your congressional staff. And do it effectively, do it in short bursts. It will take a lot of time. Whenever you send them, it should be consumable, one page. So they know what the policy is and what the ask is. But that is how you become very effective advocate and a very effective person who has an influence on policy.

SARAH MUELLER:

If you want to be in the relationship, you are also checking on the federal level. "I see that you have a hearing coming up next week, I wanted to share this one pager about the research at, are you available to answer any questions?"

MICHAEL GAMEL-McCORMICK:

That means that you pay attention weekly, we notice our hearings about a week out and help is better than aging does (?) but, we are not required to notice our witnesses until today's before hand. -- Two days.

You can see what the topic is, description of the hearing and if you have something that is germane to that, send it along. It is great. We can sometimes work it into my bosses opening comments at a hearing.

Hearings for this morning, we have a brand-new report from Joe Caldwell who has been part of the network, and he works for Rand (unknown term) University right now, and that report put out a couple of pieces. The senator held up the report during the hearing and you can have that type of impact. So, tracking is really important.

SARAH MUELLER:

I would also suggest really to get to know your member. Your member is supposed to be available and responsive, accessible to you as a constituent. Getting to know them based off of their disability policy track record.

You can use the tools that I am sure, Cindy, Liz, share around how to find your members voting record and cosponsor record on different Bills related to people with disabilities in Congress.

Many members now, thanks to really great communication staffers are really tech savvy and are on twitter. You can search, tweet, and see what tweets they have shared with people with disabilities and thank them for being responsive. But, also asked them, we would like you to support this Bill that you do not support because this is what it means in your district or this is what it means in your state. Getting to know them a little bit more from a personal perspective, I think is really helpful.

MICHAEL GAMEL-McCORMICK:

The last thing I will say is that, Washington is the nexus of the world in any way shape or form. Get to know your state staffers. My boss has seven offices around Pennsylvania. There is a one person staff in (unknown term) but there is about eight people in Harrisburg and for people out in Pittsburgh. Know who they are. And develop a relationship with them too.

They communicate back to us when it comes to policy pieces and we are happy to – I love to hear that a state staffer is talk to about a disability issue.

SARAH MUELLER:

We often hear from our state staff around casework issues. They are supporting folks who are having

issues with their Social Security benefits. Or, supporting a local nonprofit to acquire a grant.

They can also help at a state level.

CINDY SMITH:

Do you have any more to add? Or do you have any -- do you have time for any questions? If people would like to raise her hand and as a question or type a question into the chat box. I would just say, again, thank you to both of you for coming today. It is always helpful to hear from the inside of what your experiences. What advice would you give to people, how many issues did you go into DPS talking about next week, what would you suggest as people would plan for their meetings for DPS?

What would you recommend to help them frame all the questions that do come in?

MICHAEL GAMEL-McCORMICK:

My get -- got says 1, but I know that it is not reality (Laughs). I would do no more than 3, frankly. Otherwise, it feels like a longer list. You want to actually talk to some of those issues. And hopefully have at least, if not state data about an issue, certainly a story about an issue.

For those of you who have not done this before, I would urge you to say, even if you think you do not have stories, you have stories. Think about the people that you interact with every day, and think about the people in classes, families and relatives and things like that.

You probably have stories that you can share. I was talking to someone yesterday and she was saying, "but I do not know anybody." And I said "tell me if you run into someone who has a disability?" And she said "I know this person from the grocery store, and I've known him for 10 years." And that is great, they have a story there. We want to be careful with identifying people who do not give us permission, obviously. But, all of you have stories for sure.

QUESTION FROM FLOOR:

Thank you, Michael and Sarah. It is good to hear from you all today. For a first time out there, what is the most important thing that you can tell a first timer on Capitol Hill, that they need to know?

SARAH MUELLER:

I would say, because I also was a first timer when I was in your shoes. I would say, I would remind you that there is a façade of DC and politicians are really important people in many of you may be meeting with your member or your senator, but also their staff. We are people too. Not to be intimidated.

Again, lean on your expertise.

MICHAEL GAMEL-McCORMICK:

I would say, in addition to that, Mike, it is so good to see you, Mike. I would say, be yourself.

So many folks come in who have this image of what it means to be an advocate in Washington, and what we really want to hear is exactly what you are about and what your experiences are. There's nothing more valuable than that. Your power is in who you are. This morning, we had one of the witnesses and she was brought on as a policy expert, and she was most effective when she talked about her own family and support that she needed to provide and the time that she needed to take off to do that.

That was the genuine person coming through. That was really important.

CINDY SMITH:

Thank you. Edwin, I see your hand up. The other question?

QUESTION FROM FLOOR:

Thank you so much for all of you for this wonderful information. To piggyback off of what Mike was saying, what I think that we shouldn't do, things that we should be focusing on – do not do's?

MICHAEL GAMEL-McCORMICK:

Do not yell at your member or the staffers. You would be surprised people come in with a chip on their shoulder. As Sarah said, we are people too. Sarah and I have probably had 10 meetings today, each.

Our days are often 16-18 meetings. We wear down too. Think about us as people, and certainly think about our bosses as people. Both of our bosses, I say this, Sarah, are extremely -- extraordinarily proud of being grandparents and love their graduation. Senator Murray is not, but a former preschool teacher.

Just keep that in mind, Edwin, that you are talking to people who live and breathe a lot of the problems that they are working on and it is how to approach them. Also, I will tell you one thing, do not bring 98 page reports. (Laughs)

SARAH MUELLER:

It will just sit in a stack on our desk.

MICHAEL GAMEL-McCORMICK:

A good four page report is great, too is even better.

SARAH MUELLER:

And contact information on who to follow up with. That is helpful.

MICHAEL GAMEL-McCORMICK:

That is a really good question.

CINDY SMITH:

This comedy of a question?

LIZ WEINTRAUB:

No, but something I wanted to add. I think it is important with people with disabilities to speak in a meeting, if you're meeting with 7-8 people. Sometimes, not having people with disabilities to start at the meeting, might be helpful to have people to start out the meeting because people have lived experience.

MICHAEL GAMEL-McCORMICK:

I would agree with that 100%. For those of you who do not know, Liz Weintraub was of fellow in Senator Casey's office about four years ago now.

(Mobile phone rings)

She has seen this from both the advocacy side and from the staff side. My boss will tell you, there's no one more important than the person who lives the experience. That is where the power is and the real information is. Those are the folks that should be given the voice first.

CINDY SMITH:

Thank you, Michael and Sarah. I want to be respectful of your time. I know you had a very busy day with a hearing this morning, especially with Michael in particular. There, I know you had a million meetings. So, thank you and to your bosses for doing the work that you all do. We look forward to partnering you with you to improve disability policy.

SARAH MUELLER:

Thank you for having us.

MICHAEL GAMEL-McCORMICK:

We look forward to seeing you next week.

CINDY SMITH:

Maureen, do you also want to turn on the recording? I wanted to take a break for a moment, because we didn't get a chance to do questions before our two Hill staffers join. I wanted to check if anyone had

any questions on the first part of the presentation that we did before we move on to the second part? Feel free to raise your hand or put it into the chat box.

QUESTION FROM FLOOR:

Had a quick question based off what they said. Would you be able to provide us a link or resource towards learning our legislators, track record, voting, cosponsorship? That would be fantastic. It would be a useful tool.

CINDY SMITH:

We have some resources that are hyperlinked at the end of the presentation that you could look at numbers offices. The best resource is that every member have their own website. In particular, if you look at the new section of their website, you will find the best information about what they have most recently done. There does seem to be, we will talk about this website called Congress.gov, which is a Bill tracking for federal government. There tends to be a bit of a delay between members posting information on their personal websites and making it into Congress.gov officially as piece of legislation.

Honestly, each office works as its own business, even though it fall under the general rules of Congress and how the administration operates. But, they all make their own decisions on how they want to honor meetings, and so on. It is really important to get to know that members office.

Denise, Liz, do you have anything to add to that?

LIZ WEINTRAUB:

I will just add onto this, from what I understand, every office does things. Some offices are accepting visits and some are still doing it virtually.

DENISE ROZELL:

The only thing that I would add is this is for what Michael said, you should be contacting them three times a year. You are building a relationship with these people and as part of building that relationship, almost every member has some kind of a newsletter.

In addition to, obviously, watching their Twitter feed or Instagram. Wherever they are active on social media. They also have a newsletter, waste serve, something. That is another way to see what they are interested in. You do not want to be asking... it is better if you have a choice between a number of issues. You know, do we talk about employment? Education? Social Security? Whatever.

Note both what they are interested in and what is hot on the hill. You do not want to walk into their office if they are an educator from start to finish and that is what they love doing and that is where they

have their impact and start talking about something that is not aging related.

Those are all important issues and everybody needs to be talking about all of them. But you really need to figure out what they are interested then and what the timing is like for what is going on in the hill. That is an important piece as well.

CINDY SMITH:

Another piece that AUCD puts out if you subscribe, I will post a link in the chat. We do a twice a month newsletter on disability policy. It summarizes what is going on Capitol Hill and what is going on in her federal administrative agencies. The next will be coming out this following Monday but we try to do a summary of what is going on and how you can help us in those activities and what the current conversations are.

LIZ WEINTRAUB:

Cindy, can I add that there is a plain language section in it? You will want a section and you can look for plain language as possible. Something can never be translated in plain language... is legislation. But we try our best.

CINDY SMITH:

Any more questions or comments before we move on to the second part of the conversation?

LIZ WEINTRAUB:

I would also...

CINDY SMITH:

I'm not seeing anything else in the chat or any hands raised so I will move on to the next slide and we will have time for more Q&A at the end. AUCD each year goes through process to determine what our policy priorities will be at the federal level each year.

We went through process to get input from individuals and decided that these are the six areas we will focus on this year. Budgeting corporations, focus on equity in healthcare in particular the response to COVID-19. For example, you heard Sarah mentioned earlier that the health committee is working on the development but that UCD provided input to.

Generally look at civil rights and social justice issues. Issues related to... can we ask people to mute? Thank you. Looking at employment issues, looking at community living and in particular, Michael was speaking about community services and education from across the lifespan.

We did work around early childhood education and post secondary education programs. Next slide,

Maureen. So, a couple of important pieces that you need to know as LEND Trainees. There is a difference between lobbying and educating. Lobbying is an attempt to change the mind of a policymaker, government officials or the general public by referring to a specific piece of legislation and encouraging them to take action on a bill.

For example, it is talking about the importance of the home and community-based services – I am making something up at the moment, asking sanity -- Senator Casey's office to support it. That is considered lobbying which you as LEND Trainees in your official capacity cannot undertake.

What you can do and what Michael and Sarah were talking about is educating policymakers. This is informing policymakers of the data, evidence, results of policy analysis, lived experience and stories that can help policymakers make their own informed decision of what they can do on a piece of legislation.

Those pieces that Michael and Sarah were talking about is bringing the evidence that you have as LEND Trainees but letting the policymakers themselves decide what action they want to take on a particular piece of legislation. A bit more in the next couple of slides. Maureen, next slide. Maureen is freezing about.

What lobbying does not include as Michael and Sarah were talking about, that is a biased analysis of a particular policy issue. Doing studies, research, research findings and sharing with members of the general public, government bodies or government officials.

What is unallowable as LEND Trainees with federal funding is lobbying. There is a link here but talks about the difference between education and lobbying but I will give you one example on the next slide. I know Maureen's computer is freezing a bit.

So an example is at the moment, Congress is considering a new piece of legislation that will impact the LEND program. What you can do as a private citizen is you can lobby as a private citizen. As a private citizen, from your own personal email or phone outside of work hours, you can ask for a member of Congress to sponsor the legislation or vote on it.

You can also ask other people in your district to make the same request. In your roles of LEND training, from your official email or phone, you can share how the program impacts you, how it impacts the community you serve, what the outcomes are better important, what the needs are.

You can reference the name of the bill that you cannot ask for any action on it. That crosses into lobbying activities that are prohibited. Maureen, let me pause for a second and see if anybody has questions specifically about the lobbying piece. I realize it is a bit complicated, before we move on.

Again, feel free to use the chat or raise your hand. I am not seeing anything. So Maureen, why don't you go on to the next slide?

LIZ WEINTRAUB:

Yeah and this is mine. There are six things that you as we all have the opportunity as citizens. Provide information by testifying at public hearings. Such as when Denise said that I testified at – in Congress in the Cavanaugh, hearing. I did that both in my job as a citizen and write letters, make phone calls, visit and educate policymakers.

We hope that you will all do that. Not only next week when you go and visit with your member of Congress but throughout the year. I always have Congress phone numbers on my speed dial in my phone. So I call my member of Congress to help advocate for a piece of legislation. Contact members and write a letter to the editor or op-ed.

I know it is easier said than done. But it is quite very easy once you get started just telling your story. Organizing and participating in inquiries. We have a bunch of coalitions that AUCD is a member of. They are nonpartisan and the nonpartisan candidate formed to educate voters.

Last but never least is invite members of Congress and staff to visit your center or program. When I had my fellowship as Michael was saying, four years ago, one of the – one of my favorite things to do was to go to a meeting where Senator Casey was from and visit a program or a house where people live.

To see where and what people are actually doing. Next slide. This is mine still. Find emails for the staff that you meet with by visiting their website. On Congress.gov, send by state or by last name who you are looking for. Then you can write their email.

Thank you, Heather. It is really important to do that. Or you can schedule a meeting. I hope you have already done that for next week. If you haven't, you can do that. Every office in the US capital can be reached by calling the switchboard.

The switchboard, as I said, I put that number in my phone. Email or call the office as soon as possible to schedule a visit. They are very busy and there is a link to the email script.

Also add a particular topic that you are wanting to discuss with them in the email. I would also say to you about meetings, is to keep them short. With Michael and Sarah, they are very busy, so even if you are scheduled for 30 minutes, sometimes when you go to a meeting and say "I only have 10 minutes for you." Don't take that personally, but they can also be very busy.

Sometimes you will be asked "can you walk and talk with me to the cafeteria?" In addition to thanking the staff, you can attach materials or share links for resources.

Never lie. If you just do not know something, and they are asking a question that you are unsure of, please say "I will get back to you." In your thank you letter, just say "here's the information that you are looking for."

We will also ask if you can share the priorities that Cindy just went through.

We also have the state profile that is on our website in a follow-up email. There will also be useful to the staff.

I will also say, if people are expecting to meet with the member of Congress – sometimes – Cindy has a great story about this, sometimes you meet with a member of Congress, but most of the time you meet with the staffer and make a few more attempts than the member can.

Next slide?

Do some background research on the website to see what might be an interest to them.

When I go into a meeting, I always go with what they are interested in. Lately, I have been meeting with lots of people about the transformative competitive integration employment act (?) and even though I know what they want, I always look at their website to just see what else they are interested in.

You can also see what you can thank them for. You can thank them in the beginning as well.

Think the member for something he or she has supported and to start the meeting as a great way to begin the meeting.

Make it clear that you see the member as a partner in your work as well as there were, so we can all work and live in the community.

Take time and cues from the member or their staff, if people are looking at their watch. I was in a meeting where the staffer was... I remember I interviewed my... The first interview I did with Senator Katie, the staffer was at the door, trying to hurry him for a vote.

So, I took that into account. Their schedule is also very important to consider. I was working for

Senator Casey, Michael showed me Senator Casey schedule and it is from 6 AM to 10 PM. We might be working long hours, and I am sure everyone works long hours, but they work very long.

Meeting with staff is equally as important as meeting with the member of Congress. A lot of people can be disappointed especially if you're self advocates may be disappointed if you are not meeting with the member.

They will most likely give you more time, then the member.

Be early, do not take it personally if you have to wait for meeting to start. It is never good to be late to a meeting. If the meeting virtually test your connection at least a couple minutes before the meeting. I had a meeting back to back, and I always leave one meeting probably 5-10 minutes before the meeting starts. So, I know that I am ready.

If multiple people are attending the meeting, decide who and advance will cover what talking point that I recommend to you practicing it twice, if possible, once to figure out who will say what.

The topic that you want to talk about and then find a run-through about who will start the meeting.

Going into a meeting with no more than 2-3 topics and to share both stories and data. As our friend, Donna Meltzer says "that makes you credible, stories make you memorable."

What people like our stories. Follow-up with the staff -- office, it is just as important as meeting with them. Email doesn't necessarily have to be handwritten, it can be email.

If possible, for the day of the meeting. Any additional information that you promise...

Next slide?

Questions?

CINDY SMITH:

We plan to take a break here, but we can also take questions on what is covered and what I covered. Always send emails about the option than sending handwritten letters to Congress. Freethinking someone, you can wait a couple of months, but all actual mail to the U.S. Congress will go to an off-site facility where he gets screen for the anthrax virus.

It takes weeks, months for it to get to the US capital. So, I always recommend an email unless it could wait a couple of months.

Questions? Again, feel free to raise your hand or type it into the chat.

MAUREEN JOHNSON:

I see a question from Erica talking about if there's going to be (unknown term) or vendor table at the disability seminar?

CINDY SMITH:

Considering that we had to decide to put the table this year, there will not be as specific AUCD table for those who are attending in person. At the time, we are at a different place with the virus, and we decided that it is probably not good to have a table where people are gathering.

I honestly don't remember what we decided to do, Eric. I don't think there are any swag bags this year at the conference. The planning has changed, as you can guess in many ways. We started planning this last year until this year of what could be workable, feasible to do virtual and in person event.

OK. I am not seeing any hand raised... Eric, go ahead? Eric, do you have a question?

MAUREEN JOHNSON:

I see that Eric is connecting to audio...

CINDY SMITH:

I will read out savannas question. (Reads chat) if people volunteer in the states, there will be a state captain and arrange visits for their stay, that is one option for members to participate in. The other option is to go ahead and work with whoever you are LEND director, meeting coordinator is to send your own visits.

Savanna, that is an option. There are some states where we did not have anyone to support to be the state captain. But, you can set up your own visits on behalf of the landing program. -- LEND program.

If you are still trying to reach your state captain, please reach out to me, and I can assist you.

Some members are very much staying -- saying they want to do virtual visits. Others are willing to do in person visits at the US Capitol. It is really a matter of reaching out to offices and asking what they are willing to do at the moment. Things are in flux at the moment, we were not expecting the capital to open to visits -- official visits again. It is really what the office needs to decide what works best for them.

I see Eric is still trying to connect to audio, so maybe we will come back to him and I will go on to

Benjamin's question.

(Reads chat)

Benjamin, I am finding more and more, originally when we started planning this months ago. It was all virtual visits. I found members who wanted to do in person versus virtual have drastically changed, even last week.

I also see Kansas has in person visits.

I heard Arkansas is also doing in person visits. This goes to, again, each office is their own small business and decides what works for them. Maureen, maybe we should move on, and then we can move to Eric's question when he connects audio.

MAUREEN JOHNSON:

OK, sounds good.

TATIANA PERILLA:

Hi everyone, I am Tatiana Perilla and will be taking some time to talk about the disability policy seminar which will be starting on Monday. This website right here, if you click it you can find information on the seminar itself. The program in different sessions that are going to be going on. Most importantly, you can register there.

As it says there, you can schedule and register online. Today is the last day to register to be a virtual attendee. It will be the 28th to the 30th and as we mentioned, it is a hybrid event so you can attend in person or online. If we can go to the next slide, looking here we have these associations, autism Society, AUCD which is the Association of University Centers on Disabilities, the national Association, United cerebral palsy, and states becoming empowered.

To become -- to cover more information, I will pass this over to Allie.

ELLIE POTTS:

Thank you, I am going to go over what to expect as you start your disability policy seminar experience. There will be informational breakout sessions, policies, and these will mainly focus around things that impact people with disabilities, their families, or professionals that work alongside them. Such as inclusive education and home-based community services as we referenced earlier today.

Criminal justice and affordable, accessible housing. It is also an opportunity to network and I can't stress enough that as a person with disability, how important breaking is and how improving -- how

important networking is and how it social connections can lead to different opportunities.

Being able to connect with people means you might have things in common with them and you can also connect with different professionals from across the country. Also, when you are attending this session, do not forget to share your experience on social media.

People want to hear about these things, it is important to share your own experience of it. If you can go to the next slide, that would be great. Why DPS? Like we talked about all day today, it is an important opportunity to learn about current and federal policies, issues, impacting people with disabilities directly from health staff, federal agencies and national experts.

This is a very rare experience but it is also a very awesome and unique experience that we all got to participate. You also have the opportunity to educate members of Congress and staff about the experiences and full participation and needs of people with disabilities.

Advocacy is so important for people with disabilities. And their families. We all need to start our advocacy journey somewhere. So as LEND Trainees, advocacy is also very important. You will also have the opportunity to share new research data, results of policy analysis, and ideas for solutions with policymakers.

If you could go to the next slide, that would be great. For those who are attending in person, because this is a hybrid event which is something that is happening this year, some people will be attending in person and some people will be attending virtually. Virtual attendance will be covered later.

But, as you can probably guess, attending a conference in person is different from attending virtually. So here are a few tips to think about when you are attending in person. You want to review the schedule and hotel map ahead of time.

You can grab the program book and share is a link to the program book. Because paper copies are not being provided. Unless you request one for registration, bring masks and water. Everyone is required to wear a mask. Upload your proof of vaccination to avoid delays. Instructions can be found on this link you see on the screen.

Get familiar with the DPS website event. I would recommend clicking on this link early, prior to the event just so you can familiarize the different things that the app has to offer. Then, if you are unable or not able to login, please send an email to events.org and make a plan for who you want to talk to and what sessions you want to attend.

I recommend looking at the different sessions that are being offered each day. At the end of each day,

look at the next day's session so you can plan what you would like to attend the following day. Then, as I talked about previously, network with different people and presenters between meetings and sessions.

Dress professionally. And I believe AUCD has some resources on that if you have some questions about what that means. If you could go to the next slide. And Tatiana, I will pass the microphone to you because I believe this is your slide.

TATIANA PERILLA:

Thanks, Ellie Potts! Here are some things to do beforehand if you are attending virtually. This is something that Ellie Potts touched on as well, and get familiar with the DPS website. If you are attending virtually, it saves you time to try to figure out how to use the platform on the day. If you have looked it up beforehand, you will be able to take advantage.

There will be networking opportunities for virtual attendees and this hyperlink is a guide for how to use the website. I do recommend taking a look, it is pretty detailed. If you are not able to login, there is an email here that we suggest you reach out to if you have any problems.

Other tips are downloading the program book and keeping it on your computer. Just like you would if you were going to attend a zoom meeting, make sure in advance that your technology is working. You do not want to miss part of the session trying to get your technology to work.

We will see that there will be recordings and we will ask Blaine how you can access that later. We also recommend adding sessions to your calendar and looking to see which ones seem really interesting to you and putting them in your calendar so you don't miss it. You can use the chat to ask questions and take breaks as he needs them.

Feel free to take breaks. The last thing is to schedule virtual networking meetings. That is something is scheduled on the event and how you can do that. If you don't want to, it also talks about options so that you do not have to make yourself visible. Next slide, please.

These are some helpful resources and this is a guide to participation on the app that I was just mentioning. It is really helpful, you should look through it. There are also fact sheets and a glossary guide. So these are on policy fact sheets and a number of topics. Voting, community, living, education, Social Security.

There is a glossary that goes along with the worksheets that you can look at. So if you look at the guidelines as Ellie mentioned earlier, there are requirements about vaccines and masks. If you click the hyperlink there, it takes you to the page on the DSP website listing out those helpful safety

guidelines.

I thought that was really more towards in person attendees. Last but not least, sign up for email updates by clicking the link there. I will turn it over to I believe Cindy.

CINDY SMITH:

AUCD has a couple of policies and we are huge education policymakers which is why we are on the hill. Michael and Sarah made reference to these are things that are being worked on at the moment which is why it is timely to be talking about them at DPS.

The first is around services and as you probably all know, home and community-based services are necessary to support people with disabilities to stay in their homes and be members of the community. They are paid for by the Medicaid program. We also know that more funding is needed to ensure that people get the services they need from the Medicaid program.

We also need to be working to support the professional workforce. What we really need help doing well you are going to be at DPS is educating policymakers about how DPS allows people with disabilities to live and work in the community.

We still find that a lot of the time, when people think about these services, and you can even see some members reference us. They talk about home care for the elderly and helping adults in the home as they age. They don't think about it in the same way for people with disabilities and the important role that home and community-based services play to people with disabilities to stay in their home and communities.

As Michael reference, there has been some ongoing work on the hill to improve ongoing community-based services. AUCD is supporting a multimillion dollar investment and we will continue to support that regardless of what kind of economic security legislation decides to move forward.

We are also supporting the better care, better jobs act which Michael talked about that is looking to improve these services. We are also supporting the person program that helps people transition from institutional living into the community at the current program. Next slide?

CINDY SMITH:

The other piece that was referenced is trying to end the use of subminimum wage. We know people with disabilities have a hard time finding good paying jobs when they are compared to people without disabilities. We still have thousands of people with disabilities who work in workshops or low income, minimum wage.

We need to educate policymakers and the bills in both the Senate and the house at the moment that are bipartisan. We really need help educating policymakers about the importance and what the impact is on the lives of people with disabilities. Policymakers need to hear about the importance of real work for real pay in the community for people with disabilities.

AUCD is doing its work at the moment as Michael mentioned with the bill and the transformation for integrating employment act. Then the bill in the house is sponsored by Senator Bobby Scott from Virginia. And Kathy Rogers from Washington state. We put together a short disclaimer that talks with this piece of legislation here if you are looking for more information.

We are at an interesting time at the moment as I talked about earlier, the federal fiscal year runs from October 1 to February -- September 30. That said, we did see what we talked about earlier, a series of short-term continuing resolutions over the year. President Biden just signed all 13 of the federal appropriations bills for last fiscal year about two weeks ago. We are moving on to start conversations about what funding will look like for disability programs, for fiscal year 2023.

We need your help to educate members about the importance of funding critical programs with people of disabilities and what the programs do of the lives of people with disabilities. This will really kick off the conversation when President Biden issues his plan on March 28, for the plan of fiscal year 2022. More federal funding will allow AUCD's program and centers to better meet the needs of people with disabilities and their families the research, training and committee surfaces.

We need help to educate our policymakers to be educated about AUCD's programs and centers and other federal funding work to improve the lives of people with disabilities.

I included some resources here that I thought would be helpful. These would be the three of the major coalitions that AUCD is involved in to do our policy work.

It is another great place if you're looking for what is currently going on in Congress, and what the advocacy community is doing. The consortium for citizens with disability as a task force here in DC. It is made up of more than 100 national disability organizations and related organization to come together to really work on almost any issue with the person with disabilities has to work with 12-13 on task forces.

If you go to the website, you can see all of the letters that they have sent to the Congress or administration on different topics.

We are also on a smaller document called collaboration to promote self-determination. It is focus on how to improve education and workforce for those with the most significant support needs. You can

see what CPS D is doing on their website.

Going broader than people with disabilities, there's a leadership conference on civil and human rights. This represents all of us, and you can really see what the civil rights community, generally is working on with Congress and administration. They post their various letters in the reports of the put out.

Just a website for Congress that we mentioned earlier. The House has a generic website. The Senate, same thing. These are your links if you are trying to find members, and you could put in your ZIP Code. You can find the calendars for both the House and The handknit -- Senate.

If you're looking for the copy of legislation or see how your member voted, you can go to Congress.gov and it has all of the information to be able to have tracking bills and to see what members are responding to, and so on.

Maureen, I will turn it back to you to wrap us up.

MAUREEN JOHNSON:

Yes, thank you, Cindy. Again, we want to thank you for joining us and a huge thank you and kudos to AUCD policy team, Cindy Smith, Liz Weintraub, Denise Rozell.

If you have any questions about TPS registration or login or technical issues, please contact [events@thearc.org](mailto:events@thearc.org).

This concludes the 2022 disability policy seminar orientation and Policy Education 101. If you can complete the brief survey in the chat to provide feedback about this webinar. This event was recorded and will be archived and shared with all registrants, soon. Thank you and have a great rest of your day.

Live captioning by Ai-Media