Working with Congress

“We usually get the kind of leadership we ask for, and if we ask for none on hunger, that is what we can expect.”

-- Art Simon, Founder, Bread for the World

We send men and women to Congress and then we expect them to know everything about every issue. Well they don’t. They have limited information just like you and I, and they will prioritize what consistently gets put in front of them. Each day our political leaders are asked to raise thousands of dollars for their re-election campaigns, they are inundated by requests from special interest groups and their colleagues. They may be asked to vote on hundreds of issues in any given month, their plates are full and overflowing with priorities that don’t necessarily reflect our own. So we become resigned and cynical and say we’re not political, but everything about our lives is political. The taxes we pay, the schools our children go to, the roads we drive on, the seatbelts we wear, the wars we wage, so much of our daily lives revolve around the decisions our political leaders are making for us and about us. Your Congressperson will not make your issue a political priority until absolutely convinced to do so. It takes your voice to bring these issues that affect so many of us to the attention of Congress.

Remember, Congress works on the short-term, getting re-elected is first and foremost in many a politicians mind, it’s hard to be a visionary when you can’t think past the next two, four or six years. The long term vision of a sustainable world must come from outside of Congress, indeed it has always come from outside of Congress, it must come from communities just like yours joining together to demand Congress make the long-term investment to realize the end of hunger and poverty. This will take a revolution in the way we think and act, in the way we speak about the end of hunger. It is not enough to send a mass email or postcard, or to vote a new person into Congress, we must take an active role in our democracy if we are to see real change.

Our politicians can’t hear our voices in our local coffee shops, or cafes, they need to hear our voices in the Halls of Congress and they need to see our words written in our own hand about the issues we care about. The relationships we develop with our members of Congress are the key ingredients ensuring our issues garner the political priority they deserve. Margaret Mead’s quote never rang so true, “Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”
Building Relationships

Building relationships with our members of Congress, the media, other organizations and our community members are the cornerstones on which the foundation of RESULTS is built. Our successes are based on the ability of our volunteers and staff to build and maintain long-term relationships with a large network of players; members of Congress, the media, other organizations, community allies and heavy hitters within our communities to build the political clout necessary to bring about the end of hunger and poverty. RESULTS’ integrity is built upon a structure of credible, timely, and accurate information presented in a non-partisan, consistent and compelling way. Members of Congress and their aides who work with RESULTS volunteers on a consistent basis have come to rely on our volunteers as indispensable sources of credible information.

Aides

Building a relationship with your Senator’s or Representative’s aide is one of the most important relationships you can develop as a volunteer. Each member of Congress has several aides on their staff filling different roles in the office. For example a member will have one person that works on domestic hunger and poverty issues and one that works on global development issues. Often there can be more than one aide working on several different facets of hunger on their staff. It’s essential to identify the aide working specifically on the issues that pertain to RESULTS legislation. The person who answers the phone in the office will be able to point you in the right direction.

Often times it is difficult if not impossible to see your member of Congress in person, and completely impossible to speak to them directly on the phone, but the aide who handles the specific topic you are interested in will often have daily briefings with your member and will be able to put your issue in front of him or her if they are compelled to do so. So developing this relationship can be vital in turning your member of Congress into a spokesperson for the end of hunger and poverty. Get the ear of a good legislative aide and you’ve got the ear of your Congressperson.

Members of Congress

RESULTS volunteers across the country have had varying degrees of success at developing relationships with their members of Congress. There are many variables that come into play when you begin to develop your relationship. How long your member has been in Congress and his or her level of seniority can affect the direct access you will have to your member regardless of their party affiliation.

Your job is to educate, inform and inspire them about successful programs with a proven history of results in as many different ways as possible. You may get community members to write letters to their office or letters to the editor. You may find that asking a question at a political forum or town hall event is one of the best ways to get face to face contact with your member of Congress, or you may find that developing relationships with people who have influence with your member is the key that finally unlocks the door.
Because of the tireless efforts of many of our volunteers over long periods of time many democrats and republicans have come to believe that a vital part of their legacy will be the work they do to ensure that the most vulnerable among us have opportunity and access to dignified pathways out of poverty.

**Collaboration with Other Organizations**

Collaboration is a key ingredient in any social justice movement. Many organizations came together to fight for workers rights, women’s right to vote and the civil rights movement, and without this binding of shared vision would have never been able to accomplish their goals. Historically this democracy has not embraced social justice movements and in fact has brutally fought to keep the status quo in place. What separates democracies from dictatorships is that there is a certain breaking point for democracy where holding on to the old ideals or interests that profit only a few, will ultimately be given over to the fear politicians have at losing their seat in Congress. It sounds cynical but it’s true. The ship of state will stay its course until a big enough wave pushes it in a different direction. One organization alone won’t necessarily shift the tide, but many coming together has and will.

Environmental organizations, peace groups, homeless shelters, food banks, anti-nuke organizations, public health specialists, TB controllers, child welfare advocates we all have a shared vision of leaving our backyard, as well as the planet, in better shape than when we found it. Networking and building relationships with a wide array of people and organizations will push us all closer to seeing a world worthy of every child, not just a privileged few.
How do Members of Congress Get Their Information?

- The Media
- Their Aides
- Their Colleagues
- Constituents Like YOU!
- Paid Lobbyists
Much of our success in lobbying for the end of hunger comes from good timing. When you weigh in at the right time, your voice is much more powerful. Making your voice count depends on knowing how Congress works.

Each year, literally thousands of bills - pieces of legislation - are introduced in Congress. For a bill to become a law, it must be passed in exactly the same version by both the full House of Representatives and the full Senate, and signed by the President. The route it takes to get from introduction to law is complex, and most bills don’t make it! There is a lot of information here, don’t be discouraged if you don’t get it all in one take, you can refer back to this section at anytime.

The first step for any bill is consideration by a Congressional committee. For simplicity’s sake, I’ll just say that there are two basic types of committees in Congress and you will learn more about this as you go on with your RESULTS work. There are authorizing committees that set policy and also set the maximum funding levels allowed for programs, and then there is the Appropriations Committee that decides every year the actual dollars that are made available for all the programs that the federal government funds.

We work with authorizing committees to influence how money is spent. For example, in the summer of 2003, we lobbied for changes to the School Readiness Act, a bill that proposed to make major changes in the administration of Head Start; changes that in our view would damage this highly successful program. RESULTS and its partners, like the National Head Start Association, succeeded in raising enough questions about this legislation that it never passed into law.

The School Readiness Act also contained proposed funding levels for Head Start. What most citizens don’t realize, however, is that authorizing legislation does not make any real money available to programs. In May 2003, the President signed the United States Leadership against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act (the AIDS bill). The AIDS bill authorized $3 billion each year for 5 years. But in 2004, only $2.4 billion were allocated for these efforts. Why the difference? Because how much money is available for any program is dictated by the appropriations bills. We work with appropriations committees to influence how much money is allocated.

You may be thinking, what about the budget? How does that fit in? The Budget Committees are really, interestingly, policy committees. The budget process begins with the release of the president’s proposed budget early in the year. This is considered by both the House and Senate Budget Committees to be a guide from which to produce their own budget proposals. These establish a target spending ceiling for the coming fiscal year. The budget resolution is an internal congressional measure and it is not considered binding on the congressional decision-makers; however they tend to adhere to the overall targets. Because of this, we work to influence the President’s budget, and the House and Senate budget resolutions. If lawmakers have proposed funding for a program in the budget, it will be easier to ensure that the funding is actually appropriated. Just remember, the real money is in the appropriations bills!!
Most bills “die” in committee. This is why we urge you to have your members of Congress contact the committee chairs, and the ranking minority members of the committees, to express their support for bills. Your members of Congress may be on a key committee for our issues and if they are, they can play a special role in influencing key policy or money decisions. If they don’t sit on one of those specific committees, they can still write or talk to the members of Congress who do. Most decisions made in Congress are made in these committees before legislation ever gets voted on by the full House or Senate. Our best chance to influence legislation is when it is being considered by a committee, or sometimes a specific sub-committee.

Bills may be introduced first in the House or the Senate. Let’s say we’re following a bill that is introduced in the House. If and when it has been passed by a committee, it is considered by the full House. Sometimes, members can offer an amendment to the bill, other times, the bill is put to a simple yes or no vote. During floor debate and votes, RESULTS’ volunteers often work to build support for amendments or to urge passage or defeat of the measure.

If the bill passes in the House, it is then referred to the Senate, where it is sent to a committee for consideration. While the bill is being considered in committee, RESULTS activists are once again working with their Senators to express support for specific provisions or to alter the bill.

If passed by the committee, the bill proceeds to the full Senate. If it passes the Senate in any way different from the version that the House passed, the two chambers must get together to reconcile the differences, in a conference committee. Because of the pressure on this committee to come to agreement, this is the hardest time for us to influence the bill; nevertheless, RESULTS’ works to generate support for the provisions in the bill that will most benefit the poorest and most vulnerable people at home and abroad.

Finally, the conference committee’s compromise must be agreed to by both the full House and the full Senate, without amendment. A final version is sent to the President for his approval. Only after being signed by the President is a bill finally a law.
Hi everyone, this is Jason Hamrick, volunteer group leader of the Washington, DC, RESULTS group. In this section, I will discuss our 2005 work to secure quality and affordable health care for all.

For many Americans, entering the cycle of poverty starts from an inability to get appropriate health care services at the time of an illness or catastrophic medical emergency, which makes it tough to maintain steady employment. As a result, millions of American families are left without the means to be self-sufficient. While both the federal and state governments have implemented measures to account for such circumstances, more needs to be done. RESULTS volunteers recognized the links between poverty and our lack of quality, affordable health care for all and, out of this, we began work on health care in 2004.

At present, figures from the United States Census Bureau indicate that a record number of 45 million Americans, including 9 million children, are uninsured. Congress and the Bush administration are looking for ways to cut spending in order to reduce the deficit. As of now, the beginning of 2005, there are serious threats to the Medicaid program. Medicaid provides health coverage for 51 million low-income Americans, including one out of every four children. At a time when we should be doing more to expand health care coverage and increase health care quality, we may be very busy this year fighting off large-scale cuts to the program.

First let me review:

**The Budget Outlook and How We Can Stop Cuts to Medicaid**

We expect that both the presidential and congressional 2006 budget proposals will attempt to account for the huge deficit by requesting spending cuts targeted at domestic programs. The majority of these cuts would be targeted at programs in a wide range of areas, from the environment to education to health care and other anti-poverty programs.

While the exact makeup of proposed cuts are not known at this time, budget cuts could occur through three different methods:

1. **The first of these proposals likely to be seen would be an overall cap on the total cost of nearly all entitlements.** Programs are considered entitlements in the federal budget when their funding levels are set outside of the annual spending bills. Programs under this cap would likely include Medicaid, the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (or CHIP), the Earned Income Tax Credit, food stamps, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (or TANF, the federal welfare program), just to name a few. As a result, virtually all entitlements would be at risk of substantial cutbacks overtime. For example, last year the House of Representatives defeated two proposals that called for an estimated $445 billion and $1.55 trillion in entitlement cuts within the next decade.

2. **A second way domestic programs are likely to endure cutbacks is if Congress institutes multi-year caps on funding discretionary programs, those funded through the annual appropriations spending bills.** If instituted, such caps would be set well below the level needed to maintain the services currently provided by these programs with inflation, and would also lead to large cuts in a variety of government programs within the next few years. For example, President
Bush’s 2004 budget proposal included multi-year caps, which would have cut domestic discretionary programs by an average of 12 percent.

3. Finally, the budget could include a “global spending cap,” combining cuts to entitlement AND discretionary programs.

Budget cuts, whether they focus on entitlements, discretionary programs, or both, can lead to long-term structural changes to programs as well. For example, talk of budget cuts is linked to shifting oversight of key low-income programs such as Medicaid, Head Start, and Section 8 housing vouchers to the states, also known as block grants. By block granting various domestic programs, Congress could force state governments to figure out how to deal with federal funding reductions. Reduced federal funding in addition to severe state deficits would only result in more Americans not having access to important programs or the benefits of those programs being scaled back.

In order to influence this process, it’s important to understand the flow of the annual budget process. I realize this is not an easy feat, and you may want to listen to this section more than once.

1. The president first presents his annual budget proposal to Congress on the first Monday in February, this year February 7, 2005. In his last two budget proposals, President Bush requested that federal Medicaid spending be cut by as much as $492 billion, cutting approximately 7.5 million participants from the program. Please check with the RESULTS office, or go to our website, to find out the details after the president’s budget proposal comes out.

2. The House and Senate Budget Committees will then draft their budget resolutions, making decisions about when and how to cut various programs. February and March are key times for our members of Congress in the House and Senate to weigh in the budget committees about what they will support in a budget resolution.

3. After each proposed budget is approved by each chamber of Congress, the House and Senate will work to iron out the differences in the two resolutions in a Senate-House budget conference committee. Again, this is a time our senators and representatives can influence the process and, hopefully, stand their ground that they will not support any budget compromise that includes cuts to Medicaid.

4. The resulting compromise Budget Resolution will then go to a vote before the House and the Senate by April 15. To pass, the Budget Resolution only requires a majority vote and cannot be vetoed by the president.

[Note: the following paragraph was accidentally left off the audio recording]

5. If the final budget resolution does include cuts to entitlement or discretionary programs, then the committees with oversight of those programs are charged with drafting legislation outlining how they will reduce spending on specific programs over the coming years. This is called the budget reconciliation process — because the committees are required to change programs to reconcile the anticipated cuts with the budget resolution.

It is very clear to RESULTS activists and other advocates that it is necessary to maintain, if not expand, the current federal funding levels on which these national anti-poverty programs are operating. The crisis surrounding the 2006 Budget Resolution provides RESULTS with an opportunity to push Congress to prevent such cuts and ideally focus on improving and maintaining current programs such as Medicaid to ensure that no American falls through the safety net. Budget deficit were created in part through large-scale tax cuts for the wealthy. It is
unconscionable to balance our deficit through cuts to Medicaid and other programs so vital for low- and middle-income Americans.

Other work to expand quality and affordable health care for all
As of now, the beginning of 2005, our other opportunities to expand health coverage for all Americans are not clear. Following up with our 21 or more Affordable Health Care for All events in the fall of 2004, RESULTS will continue our work educating others in our community about these issues. We will work with our allies on both sides of the aisle to protect and expand the State Children’s Health Insurance Program, or SCHIP for short. Last year, $1.1 billion in federal SCHIP funds returned to the U.S. Treasury. Previously, when SCHIP funds went unspent, Congress and the president came to a bipartisan agreement to extend the use and availability of those funds. We will work with congressional leaders urging them to continue funding by enacting legislation with the stipulation that no other SCHIP funds expire and revert back to the Treasury through 2007, when Congress again takes up SCHIP legislation.

Now that we’ve overviewed RESULTS campaign for quality and affordable health care for all, let’s put what we’ve just learned into a laser talk. Remember you can go back to the longer section on laser talks earlier on this CD for guidance on how to do this.
Assuming you’re now familiar with the laser format now, organize what you’ve learned about threats to Medicaid in the budget process into the EPIC structure. You want to get your listener’s attention, present the Problem, Inform your listener about the need to protect and expand health coverage as a solution and then issue a Call to Action.
Now pause and practice your talks.
Welcome back. Your talk should open with a statement to engage the listener. You may have started with the fact that 45 million Americans, including 9 million children, lack health coverage. This will probably be new and surprising information to your listener.
In the next section, you could explain the Problem that the congressional budget resolution may call for cuts in funding for anti-poverty programs such as Medicaid.
In the Inform section, you can note that the poor didn’t cause the deficits. It is unfair and shortsighted to try to balance the budget at the expense of our most vulnerable citizens. Instead, Congress should work to expand health coverage.
The concluding Call to Action should ask your listener to take a specific action to strengthen, rather than cut, the Medicaid program. This action could be coming with you to an upcoming letter writing meeting or, if they are a member of Congress, vowing to publicly oppose and vote against a budget resolution if it cuts or caps spending on Medicaid.
As always, use the RESULTS communication network, including emails and upcoming conference calls, to stay informed and take action. You can contact the RESULTS office if you have questions or need more information. Thanks for your work and I hope we meet each other soon!
Hi, I’m Kym Park, development associate in the RESULTS office and also a volunteer with the DC RESULTS group. In this section I will give an overview of RESULTS work on early childhood issues. In 2005, that includes our work on the reauthorization of Head Start, childcare and welfare.

We’ve chosen to work on early childhood issues because they are key to any effort to break the cycle of poverty. Head Start gives children a better chance to succeed in school and in life. Good childcare allows parents to work while children learn. Recent research on brain development shows that development of neural networks begins at birth, and early experiences are crucial. At the same time, the need for quality early childhood programs is obvious. Sixty years ago, most mothers stayed at home and concentrated on raising their children. In 1947, only 12 percent of mothers of preschool children were working. By 1999, over 64 percent were in the work force. By 1999, over 82 percent of all 4-year-old children were in some form of childcare. Yet, federal child care assistance reaches only one in seven eligible children.

The Head Start Program and the Child Care Development Block Grant, or CCDBG for short, are the primary federal programs providing quality early childhood education and child care assistance. But both programs remain under-funded. Let me give you some background about Head Start:

**Head Start**
The Head Start Program started in 1965 as part of President Johnson’s Great Society package. At first it was a summer program. Soon it became a half-day program, available nine months of the year.

Head Start is a comprehensive program for low-income families with preschool aged children. Most children in Head Start are 3- to 4-year-olds. Services address the whole child, including

- School readiness and education
- Health services including dental and mental health
- Nutrition assistance
- Supports to Head Start families
- Opportunities for parents to participate in decision-making

In 2004, Head Start served about 900,000 children on a budget of $6.775 billion. This is only 60 percent of eligible 3-to-5-year-olds. The 2005 funding of about $6.84 billion doesn’t keep up with inflation, so enrollment will actually be lower than in 2004. Head Start’s funding and oversight go directly from the federal government to local Head Start centers.

The government is currently conducting an ongoing longitudinal study of a random sample of 2,800 children and families from 43 Head Start programs across the country. This study is called “The Family and Child Experiences Survey” or FACES for short. FACES data show that Head Start centers are maintaining quality classrooms and teachers and they effectively prepare children for school. Head
Start children show a greater increase in vocabulary and early writing than typical non-Head Start children.

A newer program called Early Head Start serves families with infants and toddlers from birth to age three. About $650 million of the Head Start budget is used to support Early Head Start child development and family support services. Evaluation sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services showed that three-year-olds who had participated in Early Head Start performed better than their peers in cognitive and language development and on key social-emotional tasks, such as relating to their parents, paying attention, and behaving appropriately. Early Head Start serves about 62,000 infants and toddlers — that's only one in 20 eligible children under age three.

Current Head Start regulations were set to expire in 2003 and Congress was to have renewed the program before then. This process is called reauthorization. It only happens about every five years. In the course of reauthorization, Congress can approve changes to the program that it thinks are needed.

In 2003, RESULTS worked with other advocates to strengthen Head Start and oppose efforts to dismantle the program. As a result, proposals for major restructuring of Head Start were blocked. RESULTS opposes shifting oversight of Head Start to the states, as the president and some members of Congress have proposed.

Congress should continue to impose quality improvements such as higher teacher qualifications, and provide the funds to enable local centers and staff to meet the requirements. Overall funding should be increased so that all eligible children and families can get the services of Head Start and Early Head Start.

Our main priorities for Head Start in 2005 are:

1. **To increase the funding so that all eligible children can participate in Head Start.** As I said, Head Start enrollment is down in 2005, because funding wasn’t raised enough to keep up with inflation. We should be increasing spending until eventually Head Start can serve all eligible children.

2. **Keep Head Start funding focused on Head Start and send it directly to the communities where it is needed most.** Shifting oversight to states and mixing Head Start funds with other program funds will not work to insure that our most at-risk children are ready for school.

3. **Don’t cheat Head Start children by scaling back comprehensive services.** For many low-income children, being ready to start school is about more than just learning numbers or letters. The range of services provided by Head Start programs, including health and dental services, nutrition, immunizations and parental support, is key to the development of the whole child. Head Start works because cognitive development goes side-by-side with social, emotional, and physical development.

4. **Maintain the high quality standards of Head Start.** Head Start’s success is rooted in the comprehensive standards created and refined by early childhood education experts. If you take away these standards, you take away the accountability of Head Start. It is because of these standards that Head Start is the best preschool program available today to America’s poorest children.

**Child Care — the Child Care and Development Block Grant**

Now I will briefly mention the other aspect of our early childhood campaign, which is to increase federal investment in the Child Care and Development Block Grant. There are 12-14 million children in some kind of childcare every weekday. Funding
for quality childcare is an important component of helping low-income parents enter the workforce, a core objective of welfare policy. Yet, CCDBG serves just one out of seven eligible children.

CCDBG is, as the term “block grant” indicates, a sum of money given to the states to help low-income families afford childcare. State governments have some choice in how to use this money, within broad guidelines in the law authorizing it.

Funding for CCDBG is provided three ways:

1. Mandatory funding for childcare is included in the federal welfare program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or TANF for short. During welfare reauthorization, Congress determines the program’s mandatory funding levels. Reauthorization of TANF, like Head Start, has been postponed until 2005. RESULTS will build on a successful Senate vote to increase CCDBG. In March 2004, Senators Snowe, Dodd and others proposed a Senate floor amendment to increase mandatory CCDBG funding by $7 billion over five years. It was passed 78-22.

2. In addition to mandatory CCDBG in the TANF bill, each year Congress provides discretionary funding for CCDBG through its annual appropriations process. Discretionary funding levels are not guaranteed. This means that during the appropriations process, Congress could vote to decrease or increase the amount of discretionary funding.

3. In addition to those sources of CCDBG funds, states also are allowed to use part of their welfare funds for childcare.

In 2005, Congress will again be working to pass welfare legislation. This is an opportunity for RESULTS and its allies. We must push for more money for childcare, and fight proposals to freeze or cap funding. Quality childcare equals parents working and children learning. Let’s provide the resources to meet the needs of all low-income working parents.

Welfare Reauthorization — Temporary Assistance to Needy Families

We have other concerns in welfare reauthorization besides childcare. We want a welfare system that supports low-income families by providing the tools they need to lift themselves out of poverty, rather than just off welfare. RESULTS supports maintaining current work requirements for welfare participants, which are 30 hours for individuals with children over 6 and 20 hours for those with children under 6. Also, we will urge Congress to allow flexibility in work requirements by counting at least 24 months of education and job training, rehabilitation services, and other activities that certain welfare recipients need as work.

Now that you’ve learned about our work to improve early learning opportunities for low-income families and why that’s important, let’s walk through how we can put what we’ve just learned into a laser talk. Remember you can go back to the longer section on laser talks earlier on this CD for guidance on how to do this. Assuming you’re now familiar with the laser format, organize what you’ve learned about childcare into the EPIC structure. You want to get your listener’s attention, present the Problem, Inform your listener about the need to invest in childcare as a solution and then Call to Action. Once you are done, I suggest you create another laser talk about Head Start.

Now pause and practice your talks.

Welcome back. Your talk should open with a statement to engage the listener. You may have started with the fact that 12-14 million children are in some sort of
childcare every weekday. This will probably be new and surprising information to your listener.

In the next section, there are several ways to state the Problem. You could say that the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) serves just one out of seven eligible children, yet funding for child care has decreased over the past few years.

In the Inform section, you can mention solutions that would address the problem stated above. You might say that good childcare allows children to learn and parents to work. Congress should increase funding to meet the needs of all low-income working parents. Specifically, Congress should increase mandatory childcare funding by at least $7 billion over five years, as senators voted to do so in 2004.

The concluding Call to Action should ask your listener to take a specific action to build political will for fully funding federal child care assistance, like coming with you to an upcoming letter-writing meeting or, if they are a member of Congress, speaking to the key leaders of the committees with jurisdiction over CCDBG. As always, please contact the RESULTS office if you have questions or need more information, and use the resources on the website as well. Thanks for listening and I hope to meet you at our next International Conference!
Hi everyone, I’m Alan Gold, senior legislative advisor at RESULTS. In this section, I will give an overview RESULTS’ asset development work in 2005. RESULTS has always been interested in identifying new and effective means to lift people out of poverty and in educating lawmakers and the public about the promise of these programs. Though it is crucial that we ensure that all people have access to jobs with decent wages, and to economic support when they are out of work, it’s also important to realize that people don’t spend their way out of poverty. Instead, most people who are able to avoid poverty have some accumulated savings or assets that help them weather hard times or unexpected struggles.

Given how important savings and assets are, you may be surprised to hear that about one-third of all American households and two-thirds of African-American households have no assets at all to fall back on. In other words, these households have no money in the bank and no extra cash in case of tough economic times. One way to remedy this and help low-income families save and accumulate assets is through a financial-asset building program.

Low-income people need almost all of their income to pay for basic needs, so they need some incentive to save even a small part of that income. We have worked recently on two approaches. The first is a subsidized savings account for adults, known as Individual Development Accounts or IDAs for short. The other is children’s accounts opened at birth for every child with a small amount of federal money.

**Individual Development Accounts**

Let’s look at IDAs first. Here’s how an IDA works: Once a person opens up an IDA, each dollar deposited into the account is matched — at a dollar for each dollar saved — or sometimes two or three dollars to one match. Matching funds may come from the government or private sources.

After a person meets his or her savings goal, the money in the IDA account can be used in a way that builds assets and increases financial security. Typically, IDAs may be used for buying a home, returning to school, or building a business. As part of IDA programs, accountholders attend financial management classes, an important part of the success of asset development. IDA participants learn to budget and manage credit. An important feature of IDAs is that they don’t make participants ineligible for other income assistance programs, such as food stamps, so participants can save while they transition out of assistance.

Most importantly, IDAs can create hope. Without a reasonable way to build for the future, it can be impossible for a low-income person to think beyond their family’s daily survival. But when a family has been able to purchase a home or a business, or when they have money in the bank for their children’s education, they are able to look to the future. The non-financial benefits provided by assets are as important as the direct financial benefits. Asset ownership allows people to exert much more control over their lives and enhances people’s life opportunities.

RESULTS has been working to build support for IDAs for more than 15 years. In 1998, we successfully advocated for legislation authorizing $125 million dollars for
a 5-year national demonstration project of IDAs. However, there are still only 20,000 or so IDA participants in the U.S.
In order to expand IDAs, we have worked to scale up these programs through a tax credit. In 2003, the Senate approved a bipartisan bill that would have added nearly 300,000 IDA accounts for low-income people by giving a tax credit to the financial institutions that provide these accounts. We expect this idea to be reintroduced in Congress this year and we look forward to working with our allies to expand the availability of IDAs.

**Now let’s look at Children’s Savings Accounts, also known as KIDS Accounts**
The idea of children’s accounts also got a boost in 2004 with introduction of the ASPIRE Act. ASPIRE stands for American Savings for Personal Investment, Retirement, and Education. Under ASPIRE, every child born in 2006 and beyond would automatically receive a $500 deposit into a savings account once a Social Security number is issued. Children from households below the national median income would get a larger $1,000 deposit at birth. Children from lower-income families would then be eligible to receive dollar-for-dollar matching funds up to $500 per year for voluntary contributions to the account. All funds grow tax-free. Accounts cannot be accessed before age 18, but kids — in conjunction with their parents and financial educators at school — would participate in investment decisions and watch their money grow. Assuming modest but steady contributions, a typical low-income, low-wealth kid could have about $20,000 by age 18. At that point the account may be used to go to college, buy a home, or build up a nest egg for retirement.
We will work with our allies to build support for the ASPIRE Act this year with plans for it to become law in the 109th Congress.

Now that you’ve learned about two approaches to assisting the poor in accumulating some assets and why they’re important, let’s walk through how we can put what we’ve just learned into a laser talk. Remember you can go back to the longer section on laser talks earlier on this CD for guidance on how to do this. Assuming that you’re now familiar with the laser format now, organize what you’ve learned about Individual Development Accounts into the EPIC structure. You want to get your listener’s attention, present the Problem, Inform about IDAs as a solution and then Call to Action. Once you are done, I suggest you create another laser talk about children’s accounts.
Now pause and practice your talks.

Welcome back.
You may have started your IDA laser talk with the surprising statement that people don’t spend their way out of poverty. And developing that idea in the Problem section, you can say that many of the working poor don’t have any assets or savings to fall back on in tough times. Then you could inform your listener about Individual Development Accounts, known as IDAs, that give low-income people the ability to save money and build assets for a financially secure future. You’d explain how an IDA works, for example: When a person has an IDA, the deposits that they make are matched with money from private or government sources. Just as important, IDA holders get financial management training to help
them become more financially secure. Of course, you could inform your listener about IDAs by telling a story of an IDA accountholder in your own community.

For a request, you could ask your audience to support legislation to ensure that 300,000 low-income Americans have the opportunity to save through IDAs by giving a tax credit to the financial institutions that provide these accounts. Will your listener support this legislation and work for its passage?

As always, please contact the RESULTS office for more information about our asset development work, and use the resources on our website as well. Thanks for listening and for your work to expand asset development opportunities for all Americans.
2005 Campaign Basics: Global Health

Transcript from The Basics of RESULTS CD

Hi everyone, this is Kolleen Bouchane, RESULTS Global legislative associate. Now to the first of our global campaigns for 2005: combating the diseases of poverty. This campaign deals with tackling the greatest killer diseases on the planet — specifically TB, AIDS, and malaria and other major child killers. RESULTS first got involved in fighting tuberculosis, or TB for short, seven years ago, because it is a disease of poverty that takes the lives of two million people each year, mostly in the developing world, despite the fact that we have treatment to cure nearly every person sick with TB. TB thrives among poor people because of their limited access to quality health care and their increased vulnerability due to poor nutrition, housing, etc., and pushes families deeper into poverty when the family breadwinner dies or is too sick to work, or when families are forced to sell off their meager assets to pay for medical care.

Despite the fact that a cure for TB has existed for decades, this disease is a worldwide epidemic. Every year, TB kills two million people, another eight to nine million people become sick, and 30 million more become newly infected. In the developing world, medicines to treat standard TB cost only $10 per person; yet only one in three of those ill with TB have access to proper treatment. People who suffer from AIDS are especially vulnerable to TB infection and TB is the biggest killer of people with AIDS. In many sub-Saharan African countries, the number of persons with TB has quadrupled since 1990, mainly because of HIV. Basic TB treatment, costing just $10 per person, is effective in people with HIV, and by treating TB in people with HIV we can extend the lives of millions of people by 2-5 years. People with AIDS who would otherwise die of their TB in just weeks or a few months. In countries with high rates of HIV/AIDS, TB programs are also the best place for providing voluntary HIV testing so that people can learn their HIV status, most people in the world do not know their HIV status, so that their TB and HIV can be treated.

There are five countries, identified by the National Intelligence Council, as the next wave of the AIDS epidemic — India, China, Russia, Nigeria, and Ethiopia — these countries already contain half of the world’s TB, with TB rates ready to explode further, as AIDS increases. TB treatment is a proven and cost-effective way of prolonging the lives of HIV infected individuals, and is a critical part in the battle against AIDS.

TB is also the biggest infectious killer of young women in the developing world, and it destroys the future of women and girls. TB tends to strike young adults, who are often the primary breadwinners of the family. As a family’s income falls, families are often forced to take their young girls out of school and put them to work. Even in wealthier nations like the United States, we can’t afford not to take action on this global menace. TB knows no barriers or borders, it is an airborne disease and can be spread by a simple cough. Jet travel allows a person with active TB to reach any point on the globe within 36 hours. TB can only be successfully controlled in the U.S. by controlling it everywhere else. Without a massive international effort to control TB, we will see tens of millions of needless deaths, and a dangerous increase in multi-drug resistant, also known as MDR, strains of TB; these deadly new strains of TB cost much more to cure and may not be curable at all. In the U.S., treating basic TB costs about $2,000 per person. With drug
resistant TB, or MDR-TB, treatment costs skyrocket to tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars per person and can reach up to $1 million per person or more. MDR-TB kills more than half of its victims. In the early 1990s, an epidemic of drug-resistant TB threatened New York City, killing 300 and costing nearly $1 billion to control.

In the last seven years RESULTS has helped increase U.S. funding for international TB efforts from just $1 million to $85 million. These funds will save tens of thousands of lives and protect hundreds of thousands more. But time is running out and the United States must do more to fight TB, AIDS, malaria and other child killers. Most of the funding to fight TB is being provided by poor countries themselves. The U.S. and other nations must scale up our efforts to reverse this epidemic and ensure every person sick with TB has access to effective treatment.

While we work to increase funding for TB and other diseases of poverty, we must make sure that these funds are invested as effectively as possible to provide needed drugs, patient services, and health worker training, so that more people actually receive effective TB treatment, and other prevention and treatment services. To make this happen, we must do two things.

First, we must encourage Congress to better direct how our aid dollars are used and second, we must also support effective mechanisms to channel funds, especially the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria.

Created in 2001, the Global Fund is a critical funding mechanism that is now the most important funder for controlling these killer diseases, which together claim more than 16,000 lives every day. The Global Fund is providing resources to affected countries to deliver drugs and proven health interventions—with a rigorous application process and strong oversight and monitoring. The Global Fund has already pledged funds to over 130 countries.

In his 2003 State of the Union address, President Bush announced an [President’s] Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief, PEPFAR for short, which is an important new global AIDS initiative. The president pledged to provide $10 billion in new funds, and $15 billion overall for global AIDS over the next five years, tripling previous U.S. AIDS global funding and providing some critical new resources. As the president and Congress implement this plan, they must ensure that these funds are used as effectively as possible through purchase of the most cost-effective generic drugs and proven strategies. One key way of doing this is by investing adequately in the Global Fund. The president’s current plan drastically under-funds the Global Fund. The Global Fund must receive $1.5 billion from the U.S. in 2006; it’s our fair contribution to a global effort. The Global Fund can save lives now but it needs more funding immediately.

Congress must also oversee our foreign aid agency, and its tuberculosis and health programs, to make sure that monies are directed to actually providing treatment and prevention on the ground. Affected countries must receive needed drugs, patient services, and health worker training, so that more lives are saved and diseases are prevented. Of total resources for international TB control, Congress should direct our U.S. Agency for International Development to invest far more in the Global TB Drug Facility, GDF for short — drugs now cost just $10 for a full course of standard TB treatment thanks to the GDF. The GDF is a public-private partnership working to provide high-quality, best price TB drugs to expand TB treatment. Despite its immense success, the GDF does not even have enough money to meet existing commitments or make any new grants for drugs. $20 million annually from the United States could provide drugs to treat nearly two million people.
Now in a moment, I’m going to ask you to turn off the tape and create a laser talk about the campaign against the diseases of poverty, emphasizing tuberculosis. Use the laser talk ‘EPIC’ format: That’s E for Engage, P for Problem, I for Inform and C for Call to Action. OK, please turn off the tape.

OK, Welcome back.
For the Engage section, you may have said that TB kills more young women than any other infectious disease or that TB is the biggest killer of people with AIDS. You may have stated as the cause of the problem that two-thirds of those who suffer from TB do not have access to effective treatment. You might have emphasized the scope of the problem as worldwide, and as a threat to the United States. You informed your listener about the solution, a global effort with U.S. leadership, developing TB treatment that costs only $10 per person. And the Call to Action could go: Will you, Representative Smith (insert the name of your member of Congress here), help make sure that the U.S. provides our fair share of funding for global TB efforts, and for the Global Fund to help Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria? And will you help ensure that these funds are invested as effectively as possible? This call to action will become more specific as bills are introduced and as we scale up our annual efforts to impact the foreign aid funding bills as we see that other actions are needed.
2005 Campaign Basics: Global Microcredit Campaign

Transcript from The Basics of RESULTS CD

Our second critical campaign for 2005 is expanding microcredit for the very poor. Since the 1980s, RESULTS has championed microcredit lending as a way to provide very poor people with loans, a save place to save and other support so that they can harness their own capacities and work their way out of poverty. RESULTS Educational Fund houses the global project, the Microcredit Summit Campaign, directed by RESULTS founder Sam Daley-Harris, that is committing to reaching 100 million of the world’s poorest families, especially the women of those families, with credit for self-employment and other financial and business services by the end of 2005.

Microcredit programs extend tiny loans, at competitive interest rates, and other financial services to very poor people so that they can start or expand self-employment ventures. The loans, often less than U.S.$100, allow people to grow their own businesses without having to borrow from moneylenders who charge exorbitant interest rates. Because the borrowers own their own businesses, they reap the benefits of their skills and hard work. Microcredit gives borrowers the capacity to improve the quality of their lives and the futures of their children. Increased earnings are invested in better food, health care, housing and education. As a result, the returns to the entire family and society are extremely high.

Furthermore, because more than 95 percent of the borrowers repay their loans with interest, there is more money for future loans as funds are recycled and programs can cover their costs. This kind of foreign aid investment continues to end hunger and poverty. Unfortunately, tens of millions more very poor families could use microcredit but programs now reach only one out of every 13 potential borrowers. The poorest people are often the most difficult borrowers to reach and agencies to often do not prioritize or successfully reach these poorest people.

The United States Agency for International Development, known as USAID, has been a global leader in this field for many years. But Congress has struggled for well over a decade to increase the poverty focus of this effort. Thanks to our work and leadership in Congress, a fundamental shift has occurred in the way that USAID does its microcredit work. Thanks to the introduction and passage of microenterprise legislation in 2003, USAID is now working to better ensure the very poor are reached with microcredit and other services. The law requires USAID to invest half of its microenterprise funding to benefit the very poor, defined as those who live on less than $1 a day, and to work with key practitioners to develop and use poverty measurement tools to ensure that the very poor are actually reached.

Because USAID is the global leader in this field, this is a huge accomplishment, which will positively impact millions of the poorest people on the planet when implemented. RESULTS has a critical role to play in educating and supporting Congress to make sure this law is effectively implemented.

In addition, in 2004, RESULTS volunteers collected 81 cosponsors on H.R.3818, the Microenterprise Results and Accountability Act of 2004, which has now been signed into law. This policy bill provides further landmark reforms of USAID’s microenterprise program. One, to ensure that more money actually reaches programs in the field serving large numbers of very poor clients — rather than the growing priority given to for-profit contractors — emphasizing the importance of effective microfinance networks and other non-governmental organizations. And two, the legislation also
reinforces directing half of overall US microenterprise resources to the very poor and the development of poverty measurement tools, to ensure that funds are in fact reaching the very poor.

In addition to the passage of this new law, thanks to the work of RESULTS volunteers and champions in Congress, $200 million in U.S. funding was provided for international microenterprise programs within the annual foreign aid funding bill. The United Nations has designated 2005 as the Year of Microcredit. A report released in December 2005 by the Microcredit Summit Campaign shows that the Campaign is on target to achieve its goal of reaching 100 million of the world’s poorest families with credit for self-employment by the end of 2005.

We are asking members of Congress to continue their visionary leadership by putting pressure on other key institutions including the World Bank to follow the U.S. lead. The World Bank devotes less than one percent of its finances to microcredit and has no way to systematically track and ensure that the very poor are being reached. It can and must do more. We are also urging Congress to oversee USAID to ensure that the poverty measurement tools it agreed to develop are developed and used effectively to ensure that very poor people have access to this remarkable anti-poverty strategy. We will also urge Congress to continue expanding investment in international microenterprise programs overall in 2006, of course with half of that going to the very poor. As a part of that overall increase in funding we will also be asking Congress to provide funds specifically to address microcredit and AIDS. Millions of borrowers in Africa, the Caribbean and elsewhere are economically empowered and meet regularly, providing a powerful place to offer AIDS prevention and other health education. Microcredit programs help women reduce their economic vulnerability to HIV infection. When they have access to income they are less likely to be forced to barter food or school fees for their children; also borrowers in Africa are often looking after AIDS orphans. Some 75 percent of microcredit clients with the Foundation for International Community Assistance, FINCA for short, are caring for AIDS orphans in Uganda.

That is a description of our access to credit campaign. I’m going to ask you to discuss what you have learned using the laser talk EPIC format: Engage, Problem, Inform about the solution and Call to Action. Now please stop the tape.

Welcome back. To engage your listener, you might have said that microcredit is a solution to poverty that helps poor people create and expand their own self-employment ventures. One problem you could have talked about is that only one in every 13 poor borrowers has access to microcredit. In the problems section; you could mention that our U.S. Agency for International Development has not been effective enough in reaching the very poor in their microcredit work. In the Inform section, you may have talked about how microcredit borrowers reinvest the money earned in their businesses in the nutrition and education of their children. In the Call to Action, you can ask your member of Congress to attend a future meeting with the president of the World Bank to encourage the Bank to commit more to microcredit and ensure that half of what it does commit reaches the very poor. You might have also called for a special effort on microcredit and AIDS.

Thank you for learning about these issues and working to create powerful laser talks. Now, share what you’ve learned with your members of Congress, their staff, the media, and your community.
Hi everyone, this is Leila Nimatallah, senior legislative associate for RESULTS. Our final global campaign issue is the elimination of school fees to allow millions more kids to go to school.

One of the best ways to predict and ensure a country’s future economic well-being is the education level of its children. Reducing barriers to school and increasing the number of children who can enter and stay in school will help to eliminate a root cause of poverty and its ongoing cycle. Education produces powerful and positive outcomes in economic productivity, health and social well being, especially for girls, who represent the majority of the poor.

**What Are School Fees?**
So if education is one of the solutions to ending poverty, you may be wondering: what are the major barriers or obstacles for children in getting an education? Public school fees are the number one barrier for poor, orphaned and vulnerable children to getting an education.

Many poorer nations instituted school fees in the 1980s and 1990s at the behest of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund as part policies imposed when those countries needed to restructure debt. This shortsighted policy, however, has forced nations to mortgage their future economic development and removed hope for a generation of children, especially those whose worlds are collapsing under the weight of AIDS.

[Note: part of the following paragraph and everything else below was accidentally left off the audio CD sent to RESULTS group leaders]

Currently there are 121 million children between the ages of 6 and 11 that are not in school. 41 percent of those children, over 40 million live in subSaharan Africa, only 1 in 3 children who start primary school there ever finish, and the number one reason why folks will not take in AIDS orphans is because of the extra burden of school fees.

In South Asia more than one-third of the girls never receive any education and India alone has over 40 million children out of school.

**Why Is This an Important Development Strategy?**
So why is this such a big deal, why is this so important to alleviating hunger and poverty? I think a few of the hard facts will help to solidify why education must be a major component in any development scheme for the long term sustainability of the planet and why RESULTS has re-invested itself in the fight to eliminate school fees for all children around the world.

In terms of child and maternal mortality, economic growth and development, population control, fighting AIDS, increasing productivity and increasing access to basic health care, the education of girls and women is of paramount importance. A mother’s level of education is the single most effective predictor of the health of her children, better even than the family’s socioeconomic status. For a mother who has just 5 years of primary education, her child is 40 percent more likely to make it to the age of 5 than a mother with no education, and educated mothers are 50 percent more likely to immunize their children.
Free and compulsory education is essential for societies to develop and flourish. In fact, in modern times, not a single country has achieved significant economic growth while requiring that people pay for basic education. Eliminating school fees will allow millions more children to attend school and will also provide an economic stimulus, not unlike a tax break, freeing up family income to purchase other critical goods and services.

In newly developing societies, each additional year of schooling beyond grade three or four can lead to:

- Up to 20% higher wages
- Up to 10% fewer births
- Up to 10% fewer child deaths

**Examples of Success**

Nations that have eliminated school fees have seen dramatic increases in enrollment. According to UNICEF, 1.3 million children entered school for the first time in Kenya (a 22 percent increase) after that nation adopted a free primary education policy in January 2003. Other African nations have experienced similar leaps in enrollment since abolishing school fees:

- Malawi’s enrollment grew from 1.9 million to 3 million.
- Tanzania’s enrollment doubled, from 1.4 million to 3 million.

In Uganda, using the proceeds from debt relief in 1997, they moved toward universal enrollment and eliminated school fees. Since that time, school enrollment has gone up from 2.5 million to over 6 million kids in the year 2000. It’s not a coincidence that Uganda is the place where we’ve seen the most dramatic efforts and the most successful efforts in the fight against AIDS. These two things go hand in hand. A study in Zambia found that AIDS spread twice as fast among uneducated girls as among educated girls. So education can also play a key role in halting the AIDS pandemic.

**What Have We Accomplished and Where Are We Going?**

In 2004 RESULTS and key allies worked on policy legislation in both the House and Senate that would make the elimination of school fees and other important support mechanisms for orphans and vulnerable children a political priority. The bill had wide bipartisan support, and although it did not pass both the House and Senate in 2004, Congress did something even more important — it appropriated $15 million for a pilot project incentive fund within the annual foreign aid funding bill that would encourage countries to drop their school fees while offering them valuable monetary assistance to accommodate the influx of new children in their schools. Setting up this type of incentive fund ensures that not only will there be more children able to access school, but that the quality of their education will not suffer. This was a huge legislative victory, because now one country in Africa (which is yet to be decided) will be able to use these resources to build new schools, hire and train new teachers and provide basic supplies for all the additional children who will be attending school thanks to the elimination of school fees. Once this pilot project is proven successful, it can be expanded.
In 2005, we will continue to support the elimination of school fees in Congress (via the resurrected policy bill and pushing for the expansion of the school fees pilot project in the foreign aid funding bill) and ask that Congress appropriate expanded funding to international basic education programs overall. RESULTS volunteers and other activists across the country will continue to educate their members of Congress and the media about the importance of eliminating school fees and making the needs of orphans and vulnerable children a higher priority on their agenda.

**Sample Laser Talk**

Now I'll ask that you turn off the tape and create an EPIC laser talk about school fees, using the skills you learned in the laser talk basics. Before you do that though, I’ll read a sample laser talk for you to hear.

For E or Engage you might say something like:
“I was shocked to find out that over 121 million children worldwide between the ages of 5 and 11 receive no primary education.”

For the P or Problem you may say something like:
“The reason for this is that many countries in the developing world started charging school fees for primary education in the 1980s at the behest of the World Bank and IMF. These policies have had a devastating effect on these countries being able pull themselves out of poverty. In subSaharan Africa alone there are over 40 million children not in school.”

For the I or Illustrate the solution you might say:
“Eliminating these school fees will increase the number of children in school and will help to eliminate a root cause of poverty and its ongoing cycle. Education produces powerful and positive outcomes in economic productivity, health and social well-being, especially for girls. In fact, in modern times, not a single country has achieved significant economic growth while requiring that people pay for basic education.”

For C or Call to action you may say:
“Knowing how important this is to millions of children, their societies, and our own economic well-being, would you be an initial cosponsor on legislation supporting the elimination of school fees?”

OR

“Would you speak and write personally to the key decision-makers on the foreign aid funding subcommittee (foreign operations subcommittee) to ask that this effort to support governments to eliminate school fees be greatly expanded and basic education funding be increased overall?”
**Legislative Lingo:**

**ACT** In a parliamentary sense, a bill referred to the second chamber after passage by the first chamber. Also can refer to a bill signed into law.

**AMENDMENT** Proposal to change the language of a bill or a law (offered in committee or on the floor of the House or Senate)

**APPROPRIATION** A bill providing funding for authorized federal programs. Appropriators are not required to fund programs at their authorized level. Rather, they view the amount authorized for the program as the maximum amount allowed to be appropriated.

- **Supplemental Appropriations** - Spending that is approved outside the normal annual appropriations process either to pay for unanticipated or extraordinary or to fund activities authorized too late for normal budgetary deadlines. Supplemental appropriations bills are usually considered mid-year, well after the approval of the regular appropriations bills.

**AUTHORIZATION** Legislation that creates or extends a program, generally including an outline for funding (although no funding is assured until after the formal appropriations process)

**BILATERAL** affecting or undertaken by two parties; within foreign aid bilateral refers to an agreement or U.S. foreign aid given directly to another country

**BILL** A piece of legislation, especially in its early stages. When identical measures are introduced in the House and Senate Chambers they are referred to as “companion” bills

**Versions of a Bill**
Each time a bill goes through a stage in the legislative process, it is printed by GPO as a new version. Possible versions include:

1. Introduced bill print. Each bill print will have line numbering.
2. Reported version in first chamber.
3. Engrossed version after passage in first chamber. This is official text of the bill as passed, reflecting any changes made by amendment.
4. Act version. So called because at this stage the heading is changed from “A BILL” to “AN ACT” when the second chamber officially receives the bill from the first chamber.
5. Reported version from second chamber
6. Engrossed version after passage in the second chamber. Depending on the action taken by the second chamber, this may be the text of the entire bill as passed by the second chamber or only the text of the amendments adopted by the second chamber.
7. Enrolled bill. Prepared by the Enrollment Clerk to reflect accurately the bill as approved and signed by officials of both chambers, this version is printed on parchment by GPO before it is sent to the President.

**BLOCK GRANT** Federal money provided in a fixed sum to states or localities for a specified purpose, usually with broad flexibility in determining how to deliver the services outlined in the block grant.

**BUDGET PROCESS** Think of the budget process as an blueprint for the federal program and spending priorities as seen by the Congress. It establishes the overall parameters under which decisions about appropriations and authorizations can occur.
It begins with the release of the president’s proposed budget early in the year (usually late January). This non-binding document is considered by the both the House and Senate Budget
Committees to be a guide which they will use as one of the bases for their two budget resolutions.

Congress must enact a first budget resolution before it enacts any appropriations. The first budget resolution establishes a target spending ceiling and revenue floor for the coming fiscal year. Both the House and Senate budget committees report their version of this first budget resolution in the form of a concurrent resolution accompanied by a written report. Since the budget resolution is an internal congressional housekeeping measure, it does not go to the president for his signature, and it is not considered binding on congressional decision-makers, although they tend to adhere to the overall targets.

Once all appropriations are passed (usually by mid-September), Congress considers its second budget resolution. Another concurrent resolution, the second resolution's totals are considered binding, or “locked in” by Congress. Measures that exceed the limits set in this second resolution can not be considered unless Congress passes a modification of the second resolution.

Another term you may encounter as part of the budget process is reconciliation, a process used to reconcile a fiscal year's tax, spending and debt amounts with the ceilings enacted in the second budget resolution. Reconciliation often entails making changes to existing law (or authorizations), and recently has become the method of choice to force major changes in existing programs, or entitlement programs.

A reconciliation bill and its report are compiled by each chamber's budget committee based on proposals submitted to them by the authorizing committees to make changes in programs in their jurisdictions. A reconciliation bill is introduced as a regular bill and considered in the normal legislative process.

**CALENDAR** A list of business available for floor action. Both the House and Senate have their own calendars.

**CLOTURE** Only relevant in the Senate, a rule imposing a 100-hour limit for debate on the Senate floor, when agreed to by three-fifths of the Members

**COMMITTEE** A subdivision of the House or Senate that considers legislation. Committees also undertake investigations within their areas of expertise. Most Committees are divided into specialized subcommittees. Committees and subcommittees hold hearings and debate legislation. Most amendments to legislation occur at this level.

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE ON THE STATE OF THE UNION OR COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE** This is the House in another, more efficient, form, where much of the actual work on legislation occurs. Every member of the House is a member of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union. The House as the Committee of the Whole operates under less restrictive rules, designed to speed up consideration of legislation. For example, 100 members constitute a quorum in the Committee of the Whole rather than the 218 member quorum in the House; the Committee of the Whole debates amendments under the five-minute rule (each member is permitted only five minutes to discuss an amendment) while the House debates them under the one-hour rule (each member has one hour to debate an amendment); and 25 members are necessary to request a recorded vote in the Committee of the Whole, whereas 54 (one-fifth of the House) are necessary in the House itself. When the Committee of the Whole completes action on a bill, it “rises and reports” the bill to the House, which then acts to accept any amendments (usually as a group) adopted by the Committee of the Whole, votes on any motion to recommit the bill to the legislative committee that originally reported it, and then votes on final passage of the bill.

**COMPANION BILLS** Comparable bills introduced in both chambers at the same time with substantially similar language. Designation of bills as “companions” generally indicates some cooperation between their sponsors.
CONFERENCE
- **Conferees** - Senate or House members appointed to serve on Conference Committees, also called "managers". Conferees are usually appointed from the committee or committees that reported the legislation and they are expected to try and uphold their Senate or House position on measures when they negotiate with conferees from the other body.
- **Conference Committee** A temporary, ad hoc panel composed of House and Senate conferees that is formed for the purpose of working out differences in legislation that has passed both chambers.
- **Conference Report** The compromise product negotiated by the Conference Committee. The Conference Report is submitted to the House and Senate for approval, on a yes or no vote, and cannot be amended.

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD The official transcript of debates of the House and the Senate, printed and distributed by GPO. The *Record* is divided into four parts and paginated as follows in the daily edition.
- The debate and other floor action of the House and of the Senate are paginated separately, with page numbers beginning "H" (as in H8793) for House debate and "S" (as in S3987) for Senate debate.
- Material not spoken on the floor may appear in the Extension of Remarks (paged as in E2347) section that appears in the *Record* after the Senate and House floor debate sections. If a member speaking on the floor requests permission "to revise and extend my remarks," those revisions appear in the Extension of Remarks portion of the Record.
- The fourth portion of the *Record*, known as the Daily Digest (paged as in D739), contains a brief synopsis of floor action in both the House and Senate and in all the committees that met on that day. The Daily Digest is especially useful for identifying each day's floor amendments and their disposition.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION Joint appropriations measure that provides funding for an authorized program for which a regular appropriations bill has not been passed in time to ensure an uninterrupted flow of services.

"DEAR COLLEAGUE" LETTER A short letter sent by a bill's sponsor to other members of the chamber describing the legislative proposal and soliciting cosponsors. So called because the letter begins with the salutation "Dear Colleague."

DISCRETIONARY SPENDING Non-entitlement spending over which Congress has control, or discretion. Most of the spending cuts implemented over the past few years have come from the discretionary spending portion of the federal budget.

EARMARKS Funding levels legislated by Congress for specific programs or projects. For example, designating specific dollar amounts for the Global TB Drug Facility or UNICEF are earmarks.

ENTITLEMENT A program that must provide specified benefits to all eligible persons who seek them. Entitlement programs, such as Social Security or Medicare, can be changed only through legislation, not through cuts in appropriations. Entitlements are the fastest-growing portions of the federal budget.

FILIBUSTER A time-delaying tactic that is used in the Senate to prevent a vote on a bill or an amendment. Sixty votes are needed to end a filibuster.
FILING THE REPORT  Filing of the bill text as approved along with a written explanation of the committee's actions (the report) to accompany the bill. Since the bill text as amended must be verified as accurate and the report must be written by committee staff, there is a delay between ordering a bill reported and actual filing of the report. No further action on the bill can occur until the report is filed.

FISCAL YEAR  The duration for which funds are appropriated for the Federal government, October 1 - September 30

GERMANENESS  A standing rule in the House that all amendments to a piece of legislation must relate to the subject matter under consideration

HEARING  Committee session - usually open to the public - to take testimony in order to gather information and opinions on proposed legislation, to conduct an investigation, or review the operation of any federal agency or program.

HEARING TRANSCRIPT  An official transcript of a legislative hearing contains not only the oral transcript of every member of the Committee and witness statements during the hearing, but also witnesses' prepared statements and any material submitted by witnesses or other interested parties "for the hearing record." Such material can be a good source of information about the issue or the problem the measure addresses. The transcript of an oversight hearing contains witness testimony and statements, as well as staff studies or other material describing the agency or program being studied. The transcript of an investigative hearing is similar to that of a court proceeding in that witnesses are sworn in and the proceeding is more adversarial than it is in oversight or legislative hearings.

HOLD THE BILL AT THE DESK  A maneuver reserving the right of action on a measure to the full chamber, rather than to a committee. A bill held at the desk is available for immediate consideration. Since it is not referred to a committee, the bill has no hearings or committee reports accompanying it from that chamber. A bill passed by one chamber and referred to the second chamber often is held at the desk in the second chamber, particularly when the second chamber already is working on similar legislation.

LEADERSHIP  (1) The Democratic and Republican party leaders in both chambers; (2) a chamber's leaders, who are from the majority party and are responsible for running the chamber and controlling legislative activity. The House leadership includes the Speaker of the House, the Majority Leader, the Majority Whip, certain committee chairs and other influential majority party members of the House. The Senate leadership consists of the Majority Leader, the Majority Whip, certain committee chairs, other influential majority party Senators, and, when his party controls the Senate, the Vice President (in his Constitutional position as president of the Senate). A chamber's leadership determines the overall legislative agenda, tone, and strategy.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY  The public record and deliberations on a bill prior to its enactment. Courts and administrative agencies may look to the legislative history for guidance in interpreting legislation and congressional intent. Federal agencies also look at the legislative history for guidance in developing regulations to implement the law.

KILLER AMENDMENT  Any amendment that is so objectionable to either chamber or to the president that they withhold their approval of the whole bill. In effect, the amendment kills the bill.
**MARKUP** The business meeting of a committee or subcommittee to consider the provisions of the bill. So-called because the committee or subcommittee “marks up” the bill with revisions or amendments before sending it on to the next stage.

**MOTION TO TABLE** A unanimous consent request to place the pending business on the table, thus ending debate. When used after a proposed amendment to a bill or the bill itself has been passed, the motion to table ensures that the chamber will take no further action on it.

**MULTILATERAL** Involving more than two nations or parties. Multilateral agencies include the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Regional Development Banks, as well as U.N. agencies and the Global Fund.

**OMNIBUS BILL** a conglomerate piece of legislation. When Congress does not or cannot produce separate bills in a timely fashion (by the beginning of the fiscal year in October, it will roll many of the separate appropriations bills into one omnibus spending bill. Some of the reasons that Congress might not complete all the separate bills include partisan disagreement, disagreement amongst members of the same political party and too much work on other bills. Oftentimes, omnibus spending bills are criticized for being full of pork (unnecessary/wasteful spending that pleases constituents). The bills regularly stretch to more than 1,000 pages long, and often haven’t even been read in full by the people voting for them. When it is passed, the omnibus bill reverts back to the many bills of which it’s composed and each is engrossed and sent to the other Chamber as if it had been individually passed.

**ORDERING A BILL REPORTED** The step of the legislative process taken by a committee after it has marked up and voted to approve a measure. The committee votes to order the bill reported to the full chamber.

**OVERRIDE** Two-thirds of each chamber must vote to override a veto in order for a bill to become law over the president’s objection. Other than adjournment sine die, there is no deadline for overriding a presidential veto.

**PLACE THE BILL ON THE CALENDAR** A step that makes a bill available for consideration by the full chamber. A bill received by the second chamber after passage in the first chamber is frequently “placed on the calendar”, as are veto messages from the president, and bills reported from committee.

**POCKET VETO** If Congress adjourns before the expiration of the ten days the president normally has to act on a bill, he cannot veto and return the bill to them. When he takes no action on a bill after Congress leaves, his inaction is considered a pocket veto and the bill cannot become law.

**POINT OF ORDER** An objection raised by a member of Congress that a specific matter currently under consideration is somehow in violation of the chamber’s standing rules of debate.

**QUORUM** A majority of either chamber. In the House as the House of Representatives, a quorum is 218 members, but in the House as the Committee of the Whole, it is only 100 members. In the Senate, a quorum always is a majority of the Senate, or 51 members.

**RANKING MEMBER** The most senior minority party member of a committee or subcommittee.

**RECOMMITTAL MOTION** A motion on the floor of the House to send the bill back to the committee that reported it. In the House, the motion to recommit is made by an opponent of the bill, and sometimes contains instructions to the committee to report the bill back to the House with specified changes. Recommittal motions rarely are successful.
RIDER In the Senate, an amendment that is unrelated (not germane) to the bill. Acceptable in the Senate, riders are subject to a point of order in the House and as such usually are not permitted.

RULES Rules are the published parliamentary procedures under which both the House and the Senate operate. Both chambers approve rules of procedure at the beginning of each Congress. They can be found in the Congressional Record for the date its rules are approved by a chamber.

- House Committee on Rules - The very partisan “traffic cop” of the House that reports the resolution, known as the rule for consideration, establishing the parameters of floor debate on a bill. A rule sets the number of hours for general debate on the bill and the number and type of floor amendments that can be offered. Some rules even specify which amendments will be allowed. The rule, which is reported in the form of a simple resolution (H.Res.), must be adopted by the House before debate on any specific piece of legislation can begin.

SPECIAL ORDERS Floor speeches by members on topics unrelated to legislative business at hand. In the House, time is set aside for special order speeches after legislative business is concluded for the day. A member must reserve time with the leadership in order to be recognized for purposes of speaking. In the Senate, special orders speeches may be scheduled during morning business.

SPONSOR The principal Senator or Representative introducing a measure. The sponsor’s name is listed before any other names on the bill print and in the daily list of measures introduced that appears in the Congressional Record.

- Original Cosponsor - A Senator or Representative who joins the sponsor introducing legislation to show support for the measure. Cosponsors’ names are listed in parentheses after the sponsor’s name on a bill print and in the Congressional Record.
- Co-sponsor - Once one member introduces a bill, other members may show their support by putting their names on the bill as a cosponsor. In general, a bill’s sponsor wants as many cosponsors for the bill as possible to give the bill a greatly likelihood of being passed.

SUSPENSION OF THE RULES In the House, another shortcut designed to streamline consideration of legislation. Employed at the Speaker’s discretion and used generally only for minor or non-controversial measures, it has on occasion been used for complex or controversial bills. In effect, it asks that the House rules concerning consideration of this bill be relaxed. Debate under the suspension procedure is limited to forty minutes, evenly divided between proponents and opponents. No amendments from the floor are allowed, although amendments to the bill can be included in the motion to suspend the rules (“I move to suspend the rules… as amended”). A two-thirds majority of those present and voting under this procedure is necessary for the bill to pass. If the suspension motion fails, the bill is returned to the calendar and is available for later consideration under regular House procedures.

STATEMENT OF THE MANAGERS The explanatory (non-bill text) portion of a conference report. It usually contains a discussion of the House and Senate passed versions of the bill and the conference agreement. This discussion is a good starting-point for research into the legislative history of a particular provision of a law.

SUBSTITUTE AMENDMENT An amendment that completely replaces language in a bill with different language. Substitute amendments can be offered in subcommittee, committee, or on the floor. If accepted, the substitute “kills” the replaced text. A form of substitute amendment occurs when a motion is made to “strike all after the enacting clause” of a bill passed by the
other chamber “and insert in lieu thereof” the text of its own, already-approved legislation. The result of this is two versions of a bill under one bill number, and is the first step toward a conference to resolve the differences between the two versions.

SUSTAIN If either chamber fails to garner enough votes to override a veto, it has sustained the veto, and the bill does not become law.

UNFUNDED MANDATES Any provision in legislation, statute or regulation that imposes a responsibility on a state, locality, or tribal government, for which adequate funding to carry out the responsibility is not appropriated.

VETO Article I, Section 7 of the Constitution grants the president authority to disapprove legislation passed by Congress. A bill that’s disapproved, or vetoed, is returned to Congress with a presidential message outlining the reasons for vetoing the bill. Congress then must decide whether to override or sustain the veto.

VOTES In parliamentary practice a vote is called to decide a question, motion, or to pass a piece of legislation to the next stage in the legislative process. There are different types of votes in both the House and the Senate, resulting in different methods of determining an individual's voting record. In the House there are the four types of votes:

- **Voice vote:** when the presiding officer puts the proposition to the House and calls for the “ayes,” then the “nays.” Supporters shout “aye,” opponents shout “no,” and the chair announces the vote with the phrase “in the opinion of the chair, the “ayes” (or the “noes”) have it.” The chair's opinion can be challenged by a single member who can demand a division, standing, or recorded vote.

- **Division vote**, where those in favor of and in opposition to the proposition physically go to different sides of the chamber to be counted by the chair. This type of voting is used infrequently by the House.

- **Standing vote**, when those in favor stand to be counted by the chair, and then those opposing stand and are counted. In the voice, division, and standing vote there is no record of how a specific member of Congress voted.

- **Recorded vote**, the most frequently used method, and the only one that records how individual members have voted. Since 1973, the House has taken recorded votes by electronic ballot. The House allows 15 minutes for a member to record his or her vote through electronic ballot, unless votes are clustered.

In the Senate there are three types of votes: voice, standing, and roll call votes. Unlike the House the Senate does not use electronic devices to record how individuals vote. All recorded votes are noted by a clerk during a roll call vote, as the senators respond to their names with a vote of “yea” or “nay.” It takes one-fifth of the senators present in the chamber to request a roll call vote.

WHIP Appointed member of each party in each chamber to assist leadership in developing the legislative agenda, and to monitor likelihood of passage on controversial measures (count votes) among other duties

Sources included:
http://www.cdfactioncouncil.org/glossary_of_legislative_terms.htm
Lexis-Nexis Congressional


Congressional staff directory. Indianapolis: New Bobbs-Merrill, 1959-.

CQ's politics in America. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2000-


