Congressional Staff Orientation

1. **Selecting Congressional Office Space**
2. What interesting details do you see on these two maps?
3. Who has offices inside the US Capitol Building? Why do you think these people have their offices there?
4. In which buildings do most members of the House of Representatives have their offices?
5. Of the three possible office spaces listed below, which would you recommend that your congressperson select and why?
   1. Second-floor office suite in the Rayburn Building
   2. Third-floor office suite in the Longworth Building
   3. First-floor (ground level) office suite in the Cannon Building (One of the three offices in this suite is not connected to the other two offices, but is instead few yards down the hall.)
6. **Hiring Congressional Staff**
7. What interesting things do you see in the organizational chart for a typical Capitol Hill office?
8. Which chamber has more staff members? Why do you think that is?
9. What qualities should your congressperson look for when hiring for each of these positions? (Consider age, background, and experience.)
10. **Requesting Committee Assignments**
11. What industries play an important role in your congressperson’s district?
12. Which of the exclusive committees would you recommend your congressperson join? Why?
13. Typically, only experienced members of Congress are assigned to exclusive committees. What major committees and no- major committees would you recommend that your congressperson request from party leaders? Why?
14. **Choosing and Working in Caucuses**
15. In 3-5 words, summarize the issues each of the following caucuses are concerned about.
16. The Blue Dog Coalition
17. Congressional Diabetes Caucus
18. House Tea Party Caucus
19. Congressional Travel and Tourism Caucus
20. Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth
21. Congressional Bike Caucus
22. Congressional China Caucus
23. House of Representatives Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition
24. What role do caucuses play in influencing policy? Give Examples.
25. Which caucuses would you recommend for your congressperson to join? Why?
26. **Working on Legislation**
27. What interesting information do you see on the diagram?
28. Approximately what percentage of bills and joint resolutions introduced in 2012 were actually signed into law?
29. According to the diagram, between which steps in the process do most bills “die”?
30. Who are some of the groups or individuals that might kill a bill and keep it from becoming law? Why might they oppose a particular bill?
31. What bill might your congressperson propose to help your district?

**F. Doing Constituent Casework**

1. About how many letters and emails does our congressperson receive from constituents per year? How do you think your congressperson address all these concerns?
2. Examine the inbox of your congressperson. What types of casework issues does your congressperson’s staff work on?
3. Which constituent emails would you recommend your congressperson address first? Why?
4. Why do your think casework is such an important part of what members of Congress and their staff do?

**G. Protecting the Interest of the District**

1. What interesting details do you see in the cartoon?
2. Based on this cartoon, what are some ways that legislators protect or work for the interests of their districts?
3. What might be the consequences if all legislators acted this way, all the time?
4. What types of projects has Congress set aside money for?
5. Would you recommend your congressperson support projects like these for your district? Why or why not?

**H. Running for Re-election**

1. In general, what percentage of incumbents in the House and Senate are reelected?
2. Why do you think such a high percentage of legislators are reelected?
3. In general, who spends more money in campaigns: incumbents or challengers? Is that trend increasing or decreasing?
4. What connections might you make between the information on these graphs?