

## Congressional Meeting Guide

### Our ASK for members of Congress is:

Protect U.S. international assistance so that women and girls can thrive, families can survive immediate crises, and communities can emerge from poverty – ensuring a brighter future for people around the world and here at home.

### BEFORE THE MEETING

Coordinating meeting roles with your group during our strategy session is essential to ensure you have successful meetings. Make sure each member of the group has one of the following roles:

- **Meeting Leader:** This will be assigned to a constituent of the member of Congress, not a CARE staff person. The meeting leader will kick-off the meeting, ensure the ask is made and send a thank you note after the meeting.
- **Designated Advocate:** This will be an assigned group member who has a specific speaking role during the meeting.
- **Notetaker:** The CARE staff Hill Day leader for the group will take notes during the meeting and a picture after the meeting to submit in the Soapbox mobile tool.

### MEETING OUTLINE & TALKING POINTS

This outline will help you have a successful meeting and includes tips on suggested roles for each group member. *Note: you won't have time to make every point—use these talking points as a helpful resource.*

### I. INTRODUCTIONS: WHO YOU ARE AND WHY YOU'RE HERE

#### INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO THE MEMBER OF CONGRESS OR STAFF (MEETING LEADER)

- **Meeting Leader** opens the meeting by saying why the group is here – to join CARE in protecting the small amount of funds the U.S. invests in international programs around the world.
- **Meeting Leader** shares where they're from and a very brief connection to the state and/or district (this could be your town, school, faith community, etc.).
  - Thank the member of Congress / staff member for taking time to meet and discuss issues that are important to you and other constituents in your state/district.
  - **TELL YOUR STORY:** Share why international assistance is important to you, using a personal story to illustrate your point.
  - Ask other participants to introduce themselves (name and hometown only).
  - Invite the member of Congress or staff to introduce themselves.

## INTRODUCE CARE (DESIGNATED ADVOCATE)

- CARE is a **global leader within a worldwide movement** dedicated to ending poverty.
- For the last 80 years, CARE has been a trusted partner of the U.S. government, country governments, communities, and local partners to save lives and ensure the efficacy of American investments abroad.
- In its eight-decade history, CARE has worked with 14 U.S. Presidents and generations of American leaders as **champions of freedom, hope, and opportunity**.
- Last year alone, CARE reached 54 million people in 118 countries.
- CARE works **alongside** women because in many countries they are denied basic education, safety, economic opportunity, and property rights, however evidence shows that when women and girls are empowered, entire communities thrive.

## II. INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE BACKGROUND: SET THE STAGE FOR THE CONVERSATION

### INTRODUCE THE ASK (DESIGNATED ADVOCATE)

We're here today to ask you to support U.S. international assistance so that women and girls can thrive, families can survive immediate crises, and communities can emerge from poverty – ensuring a brighter future for people around the world and here at home.

- **U.S. international assistance is a strategic investment** that saves lives worldwide, addresses the underlying causes of poverty, and decreases dependency on U.S.-funded aid in the future, benefitting people around the world and here at home.
  - Some examples of tangible returns of international assistance on the U.S. include more trade opportunities, stronger national security, reduced mass migration, expanded economic partnerships, and greater opportunities for America to remain – or become – the first ally and partner of choice for other countries.
  - Food aid is a strong example of how international assistance benefits the U.S. Food aid programs are a dependable source of income to American farmers and shipping companies, and by increasing value chain standards in developing countries, results in safer supplies of food imports to the U.S.
  - International assistance is one of the most effective ways the U.S. can create more stable global communities that can graduate from being aid recipients to U.S. partners and allies.
- International assistance supports a **wide variety of programs** that aim to save lives and improve access to nutritious food, clean water, reliable health care, education, safety, financial tools, and more.
  - The U.S. government-funded program Takunda is a great example of this and is featured in CARE's leave behind. The program helps train families to grow more

- food, increase incomes, and invest their earnings in savings groups. CARE knows that every \$1 invested in savings groups returns \$9 within a year.
- As a result, this small, strategic investment more than pays for itself with the safety and stability it brings to the world. **It's a down-payment today** to advance the ability of partner nations to care for their own citizens for generations to come while preparing for future challenges.
  - With a global hunger crisis raging, extreme poverty rising, and natural disasters affecting all of us, investments helping people become self-sufficient are more critical than ever.
    - As the world prepares to celebrate International Women's Day on March 8, CARE recognizes that these challenges are even more dire for **women and girls** around the world, who have less access to resources and opportunities and face greater risks of violence.
    - Supporting women and girls through U.S.-funded programs leads to stronger economic growth, better governance, and greater food security for all.
    - For example, a life-skills training program in India used U.S. government investments to teach women public-speaking and communications skills and help them access government programs. As a result, women participants successfully ran for local office and convinced local government to build wells and clean water infrastructure that support the entire community at a time when women and girls around the world collectively spend more than 150 million hours a day gathering clean water.
  - **In a few sentences, a Global Woman Leader or Designated Advocate shares a story on the local impact of these programs.**
    - In Zimbabwe, the U.S. government-funded program Takunda – meaning “We have overcome” – gave a community the chance to form a village savings and loan association (VSLA) to save money together and provide each other with small loans.
    - Philomina, a mother of four, took advantage of the trainings and loans as part of the VSLA and more than doubled her initial investment, allowing her to reinvest more stock and grow her business.
    - With her growing earnings, Philomena is securing her family's future with improvements to their home and new ventures, like poultry. Now, Philomena is achieving financial independence, reducing the need for long-term reliance on aid and supporting more stable communities.
  - Supporting international assistance does **not** come at the expense of U.S. priorities – in fact, international assistance complements, not competes, with domestic issues.
    - At less than 1% of the total federal budget, these investments keep the priority

on America's needs while ensuring our seat at the table to promote U.S. influence around the world.

- CARE agrees that U.S. Government-funded international assistance should responsibly steward taxpayer dollars, demonstrate impact, and benefit the U.S. and the world.

### III. MAKE THE ASK

**“Will [MEMBER OF CONGRESS’ NAME] protect U.S. international assistance to support those around the world and here at home?”**

### IV. DISCUSSION

Facilitate discussion with the member or staff, noting questions you cannot answer and requests for additional information so that the CARE staff can follow up.

Example questions:

- *If the office supports our ask: What are your other foreign policy priorities for this fiscal year?*
- *Does your boss foresee a future for U.S. investments in programs that lift up women and girls?*
- *If the office does not commit to supporting our ask: What are your questions or concerns about increased funding for U.S. international assistance?*

### V. CONCLUSION

- **Constituent** thanks the member of Congress and/or staff for meeting.
- Ask the member of Congress and/or staff to take a picture.
- Tell the member of Congress you hope to meet with them in-district during an upcoming congressional recess.

### AFTER THE MEETING

#### **PROVIDE MEETING FEEDBACK (NOTETAKER)**

Immediately after each meeting, complete the meeting feedback form in the Soapbox mobile tool at [sboxmobile.com](http://sboxmobile.com). Include meeting details and any required follow-up. These notes will be shared with CARE staff for further follow-up.

#### **SEND THANK YOU EMAIL (MEETING LEADER)**

Send a thank you email to the congressional staff you met with by personalizing the below template.

**To:** [STAFF CONTACT NAME]

**Subject:** Thank You for Meeting with Us

**Email Body:**

Dear [STAFF CONTACT NAME]:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me and [INSERT GROUP MEMBER NAMES] about the importance of U.S. international assistance to people around the world and here at home.

As a reminder, CARE works to end poverty by addressing its underlying causes and by putting women and girls at the heart of all we do. I hope you will stand with women and girls around the world by supporting funding that invests in their futures and leads to positive multiplier effects on families, communities, and entire countries.

This assistance can change millions of lives every year, decrease dependency on U.S.-funded aid in the future, and advance economies and U.S. national security.

Thank you again for standing with CARE at this critical time. Please reach out to me if you have additional questions. I look forward to staying in touch.

Sincerely,  
[YOUR NAME]