Getting in touch with candidates and incoming members of Congress

Why it's important: The transition period is when offices are hiring staff, planning their top priorities, identifying what committee assignments they want to seek out, and learning how Congress works. If your FCNL Team can be among the first groups to engage your newly elected member of Congress and offer support, it will help set up your ongoing advocacy relationship for success!

Disclaimer: Every office is a little bit different and will get organized in their own way and at their own pace. If one outreach method doesn't work for you at first, try another.

Looking for contact information:

- Web search the candidate's name to find their campaign website. Look for a contact us form or a general email (e.g. info@nameforcongress, hello@nameforcongress).
- Search the candidate on social media. Facebook and Instagram are good places to start. Follow them and send them a direct message asking for a meeting or asking for them to come to an upcoming event.
- If they don't reply to a direct message, comment on one of their posts and tag them, or tag them in one of your posts.
- Ask around: do you know anyone who volunteered on their campaign or got in touch with their staff at a meet and greet? Do you know anyone who knew the candidate or worked with them before they ran for office? See if anyone in your personal networks has a connection with the candidate or their staff, especially their campaign manager.
- Look up their email on record with their FEC filing: https://www.fec.gov/data/
    - Go to “Look up candidate and committee profiles”
    - Type in the candidate's name
    - Click on About this candidate
    - Scroll down to committees and look for authorized campaign committee
    - Click on About this committee
    - Click on Statement of organization (FEC Form 1)
    - Look for a Treasurer's email address or main campaign email address

- Sign up for their volunteer list or email list and attend their events that they promote. Try to speak with a staff person or volunteer leader at one of their events, or reply to the sender of the email.

Ask to meet with them:

- Ask to get a meeting set up with them during their transition period
    - If they say no, ask to get something on the calendar during their first month after being sworn in.
- See if you can connect with their campaign manager specifically, who often will transition into being the chief of staff in the legislative office.
- Ask multiple times and try different methods until you hear back

Influencing offices during their transition:

- Offer support as they and their team get up to speed, framing your team as a resource to help them get settled
- Send them FCNL's policy priorities, including the latest Advocacy Teams legislative ask
- Offer to educate them and their staff on foreign policy issues, or connect them with FCNL's policy staff
- Offer to connect them with constituencies and community leaders in the district
- Transition is hiring time! Send them names and emails of talented people who might be looking for a job in the new office.

Template for an email or DM to an incoming member:

Hi Team (Name of Candidate),

I'm (your name) with the (City, state) FCNL Advocacy Team. We were hoping to find a time on your calendar during the transition to meet with you and your team! We'd love to support you all as you get set up and talk about how we can work together on some of our shared priorities—ending the war in Iran, passing a budget that meets everyday people's needs, and more. (A sentence about who is on your team or in your network: We have XX team members that come from the following communities/coalitions in our district:) Could you let us know if you or someone from your campaign team could meet with us on (propose 2 dates)? You could join us at our upcoming event, or we could meet up at a coffee shop convenient for you.

Congratulations on an exciting election result and we can't wait to meet soon and work together!