A Few Helpful Tips on How to Brief an Appropriator*

- Do your homework! Know your issue—both the substance and the $
- Remember what makes them tick: it's about $$. But it's also about meeting agency requirements and navigating the political dynamics
- Watch the schedule—know when staff are in "black out" mode
- Be specific—and be able to justify what you are asking for:
  - What is your ask?
  - What are we buying with this money? People? Programs? Activities? Why is it important to the agency's mission? Why should the Chairman/Ranking care about this?
  - What is the total cost of effort? Is this one-year money?
  - When can this money be spent? On Oct 1st?
  - Who supports this?
  - Who opposes this?
  - Will this displace a current contractor?
- Be careful of "traps":
  - "How will you pay for this?" [Offsets only needed if offering a $ amendment to the bill during Sub, Full or Floor consideration].
- Don't:
  - Tell staff they will save money by spending money
  - Tell staff this will buy world peace
  - Lie or hide important information (they'll find out and never speak to you again)
  - Act as a subject matter expert if you aren't
  - Don't tell staff how they should view this –ask for their support but don't tell them to support it
  - Ramble on. Time is short. Be very specific.
  - Blind side the Committee with an amendment at Sub, Full or Floor
- Remember to:
  - Say thank you at the start and the finish of the presentation
  - Bring any and all back up information that you think you will need
  - Read the BILL and the report prior to going up to brief staff...from a few prior years
  - Read the QFR's from prior years
  - Be sure you have looked at recent hearings –both on the Appropriations and the Authorizing Committees
  - Brief both sides of the aisle (as appropriate)

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