



THE

GOVERNMENT

AFFAIRS

INSTITUTE

at Georgetown University

Congressional Operations Seminar for National Park Service (online)

Conducted By

Worth H. Hester, Jr.

of

Government Affairs Institute
at Georgetown University
Telephone (202) 333-4838

September 14 - September 15, 2021

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Congressional Operations Seminar for National Park Service

Agenda

Prior to First Class

- On Your Own **The Nature of Congress (Pre-Recorded)**
Matt Glassman, Ph.D.
Senior Fellow
Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University
- On Your Own **Staffing a Member's Personal Office (Pre-Recorded)**
Kristin Nicholson
Director
Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University
and
Former Chief of Staff
The Honorable James R. Langevin (D)
State of Rhode Island - 2nd District
U.S. House of Representatives
- On Your Own **Congress and Outside Interests (Pre-Recorded)**
Jennifer N. Higgins
Vice President of Government Affairs
Guardant Health

Tuesday, September 14, 2021

- 12:00 - 12:30 pm **Introduction**
Worth H. Hester, Jr.
Assistant Director and Senior Fellow
Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University
- 12:30 - 12:45 pm **Break**
- 12:45 - 2:00 pm **Leadership and Organization in the 117th Congress**
Susan Sullivan Lagon, Ph.D.
Non-Resident Senior Fellow
Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University
- 2:00 - 2:15 pm **Break**
- 2:15 - 3:30 pm **Key Stages in the Legislative Process**
Worth Hester
- 3:30 - 4:00 pm **Briefing for Observing Committee Hearings**
Worth Hester
- On Your Own **View Committee Hearings (Pre-Recorded)**
Links to committee hearings can be found on the course Landing Page
- On Your Own **The Congressional Appropriations Process (Pre-Recorded)**
Michelle Mrdeza
Former Clerk
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

Wednesday, September 15, 2021

- 12:00 - 1:00 pm **The Role of Congressional Committee Staff**
Brandon Bragato
Staff Director
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands
House Committee on Natural Resources
- 1:00 - 1:15 pm **Break**
- 1:15 - 2:30 pm **Partisanship in Congress: Has it Always Been This Bad?**
Josh Huder, Ph.D.
Senior Fellow
Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University
- 2:30 - 2:45 pm **Break**
- 2:45 - 3:30 pm **Roundtable on Committee Functions and Operation**
Worth Hester
- 3:30 - 4:00 pm **Key Takeaways**
- On Your Own **Floor Procedures in the House and Senate (Pre-Recorded)**
Laura Blessing, Ph.D.
Senior Fellow
Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University
- On Your Own **A Former Member's Perspective on the Congress (Pre-Recorded)**
The Honorable William V. Hilleary (R)
Chief of Staff
Office of The Honorable John W. Rose
State of Tennessee -- 6th District
U.S. House of Representatives
and
Former Representative
State of Tennessee--4th District
U.S. House of Representatives

Course Director

Worth H. Hester, Jr. is a Senior Fellow and Assistant Director of the Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University. He joined the faculty of GAI in 1988 as a Presidential Management Fellow and took the job of Assistant Director in 1999. During seven years of government service, he served as an Employee Development Specialist, Program Analyst, and Legislative Analyst for a Member of Congress. Worth also spent two years as Senior Staff with the Center for Public Policy Education at the Brookings Institution.

Worth has been studying and teaching about Congress and the legislative process for more than 30 years. He has served as Director of the Institute's Capitol Hill Fellowship Program since 1997 and is Vice President of the Institute's Board of Directors. He received his B.A. degree magna cum laude in Government from Campbell University. His M.P.A. in Coastal Studies/Natural Resource Management is from the University of West Florida.

Speaker Bios

Matt Glassman, Ph.D.

Matt Glassman, Ph.D., joined the Government Affairs Institute as a Senior Fellow in 2017. He has taught courses on and off the Hill on American government, congressional process, congressional-presidential relations, and congressional leadership.

Prior to joining GAI, Matt worked on the Hill at the Congressional Research Service (CRS) for ten years. His portfolio included congressional operations, separation of powers, appropriations, judicial administration, agency design, and congressional history. He was detailed to the House Committee on Appropriations as professional staff for the Legislative Branch Subcommittee in FY2010 and FY2011. Matt holds Masters and Ph.D. degrees from Yale University.

Kristin Nicholson

Kristin Nicholson is the Director of the Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University. Prior to joining GAI, she spent two decades on Capitol Hill, where she served for sixteen years as Chief of Staff to Congressman Jim Langevin (D-RI). She spent her early years on the Hill serving in senior staff positions for Rep. Glenn Poshard (D-IL) and Rep. David Phelps (D-IL).

Kristin holds a B.S. from Northwestern University and a J.D. from the University of Colorado School of Law, and she was selected as a Stennis Congressional Staff Fellow in the 109th Congress. Kristin is also the co-founder of Congress Too, an organization of former congressional staff dedicated to addressing issues of sexual harassment in and around Congress.

Jennifer N. Higgins

Jenn Higgins is the Vice President of Government Affairs at Guardant Health. Prior to joining Guardant, she was partner at Chamber Hill Strategies. Jenn has spent the past fifteen years using her tenacity and policy knowledge to help corporate executives navigate a constantly changing legislative and regulatory landscape.

During her tenure in Washington, Jenn has represented a wide variety of Fortune 500 companies before Congress and the Administration, serving as Principal and Partner with two prominent lobbying firms, as well as advising senior agency officials at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Jenn has consistently cultivated her relationships with key Republican members within the House Ways and Means Committee and Senate Finance Committee, due to their primary jurisdiction on health care and tax issues. Her work with House Republican leadership has also facilitated direct access for clients to key decision makers in the health care, tax, and immigration space.

Jenn also spent four years capitalizing on her health policy expertise to advise Wall Street investors and hospital chief executives. As Senior Associate with the Marwood Group, a healthcare and financial services firm based in New York, her primary responsibility was to advise clients on the legislative and regulatory risks to facility-based health care companies. Her previous experience includes debriefing hospital chief executives on the intricacies of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 as an analyst with the Advisory Board Company.

Jenn is engaged in a variety of political activities here in Washington, particularly ongoing efforts by the Republican campaign committees to recruit and elect more Republican women to Congress. Since 2016, she has served as Board Chair for Right NOW Women PAC, a political action committee dedicated to supporting female Republican candidates nationwide, while also advising several other political organizations on candidate recruitment. When she is not lobbying or campaigning, Jenn serves as a guest lecturer at Georgetown University's Government Affairs Institute and a regular panelist on PBS's To the Contrary, a weekly discussion of news and national affairs with a panel of nationally known women.

Jenn attended Davidson College where she received a B.A. in Medical Economics and Ethics. She also holds a Certificate in Legislative Studies from Georgetown University's Government Affairs Institute.

Susan Sullivan Lagon, Ph.D.

After two decades as a Senior Fellow with the Government Affairs Institute (GAI), Susan Sullivan Lagon took Non-Resident Senior Fellow status in 2015. For several years, she taught American Politics and Constitutional Law in the Government Department at Georgetown. Before coming to Georgetown, she was a book editor at Congressional Quarterly (where she was a frequent speaker on CQ's "Understanding Congress" seminars) and she taught American Government and AP Politics at NCS/St. Albans. She has been invited to give lectures for numerous groups including the Fulbright Scholars Program, the World Bank, and more than 500 international visitors groups sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. Currently Prof. Lagon teaches occasionally for GAI and the Canadian School of Public Service, and serves as the Historian at the Jefferson Hotel four blocks north of the White House, where she interprets Thomas Jefferson's political, architectural, and culinary contributions to American life.

Susan grew up "inside the Beltway" and holds a B.A. and M.A. in Government and Foreign Affairs from the University of Virginia. Her Ph.D. is from Georgetown University.

Michelle Mrdeza

Michelle Mrdeza is President of her own consulting firm, MXMconsulting, which she started after 23 years of government experience. She ended her Congressional career as the first Staff Director (Clerk) for the House Committee on Appropriations' Subcommittee on Homeland Security. Prior to her position on the Homeland Security Subcommittee, Mrdeza served as the majority staff director of the House Treasury, Postal Service, & General Government Appropriations Subcommittee from 1995-2003—becoming one of the first women to serve as an appropriations subcommittee staff director. From 1992-1995, she was the only Republican staffer on both the Energy & Water and Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government subcommittees.

Mrdeza's Congressional experience started in 1985 as a senior analyst with the Senate Budget Committee, where she focused on education, job training, social services, and Veterans' benefits. Prior to these positions, she worked as a policy analyst at both the Veterans' Administration and the Office of Management and Budget.

She holds a B.S. in special education from UVA, as well as a Master's in Public Administration and a Master's in Sustainable Landscape Design, both from George Washington University.

Brandon Bragato

Brandon Bragato has been the Staff Director for the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands of the House Committee on Natural Resources since 2019, having served as professional staff on the committee since 2013. Previously, he was a Legislative Assistant for Congressman Raul Grijalva. Prior to coming to Congress, Brandon served in the Peace Corp. He received his B.A. from San Francisco State University, and his M.A. from the University of Kent.

Josh Huder, Ph.D.

Joshua C. Huder, Ph.D., joined the Government Affairs Institute as a Senior Fellow in 2013. He primarily teaches courses on American government, Congress, advanced legislative process, separation of powers, and the federal budget process. He has provided political analysis to several news outlets, including the New York Times, Washington Post, Congressional Quarterly, Newsweek, Washington Examiner, Bloomberg News, CNN, and more.

Prior to joining GAI, Josh worked on the Hill as an American Political Science Association (APSA) Congressional Fellow. His portfolio included legislative procedure, government affairs, financial services, voting rights, campaign finance, trade, small business, and other issues. He is currently writing a book on the history of congressional procedure and politics since 1879.

Education: PhD, University of Florida; MA, University of Florida; BA, Rutgers University

Laura Blessing, Ph.D.

Laura Blessing, Ph.D. joined the Government Affairs Institute as a Senior Fellow in 2015. Prior to coming to GAI, she earned her PhD from the University of Virginia, where she was also a Miller Center National Fellow and a fellow for the Bankard Fund for Political Economy. Her dissertation covers the politics and development of tax policy; her interests include policy, institutions, and political parties. While at UVA she also taught courses on Congress, the Presidency, and Media and Politics for students at both UVA and Sweet Briar College. After defending her dissertation, she worked on the Hill as an American Political Science Association (APSA) Congressional Fellow. She served as the legislative assistant for tax policy for a senior member of the Ways and Means Committee. She is currently working on a book on the politics of tax policy from the midcentury period to today.

Education: PhD, University of Virginia; MA, University of Virginia; MAT, Johns Hopkins University; BA, George Washington University.

William V. Hilleary

The Honorable Van Hilleary is the former Representative from the 4th District of Tennessee ('95 - '02). He recently took the position of Chief of Staff to Representative John Rose, a Republican representing the 6th District of Tennessee. A native of Tennessee, Van helped start and run the family textile company. He graduated from the University of Tennessee, served in the Air Force, went to law school, and then volunteered for duty in the Persian Gulf War. He flew 24 missions in a C-130. He ran for Congress on the Republican ticket in 1994 and was elected with 57% of the vote. He was re-elected 3 more times, each time with a greater percentage of the vote. He served on the Armed Services Committee, the Budget Committee, and the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

He left the Congress in 2002 to run for Governor, but lost in a close race, 51-48%. A longtime favorite speaker on our programs, Congressman Hilleary was elected to serve on GAI's Board of Directors in 2013.