

THE
GOVERNMENT
AFFAIRS
INSTITUTE

at Georgetown University

Congressional Briefing for Presidential Management Fellows

Conducted By

Laura Blessing, Ph.D.

of

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

March 6 - March 10, 2023

© 2023 The Government Affairs Institute

Congressional Briefing for Presidential Management Fellows

Agenda

Monday, March 6, 2023 Room 2075
Rayburn House Office Building

- 8:00 - 8:30 am **Continental Breakfast**
- 8:30 - 9:15 am **Introduction**
Laura Blessing, Ph.D.
Senior Fellow
Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University
- 9:15 - 9:30 am **Break**
- 9:30 - 10:30 am **The Nature of Congress**
Laura Blessing, Ph.D.
- 10:30 - 10:45 am **Break**
- 10:45 - 12:00 pm **Leadership and Organization in the 118th Congress**
Mark Harkins
Senior Fellow
Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University
- 12:00 - 12:45 pm **Lunch**
- 1:00 - 2:00 pm **Key Stages in the Legislative Process**
Worth H. Hester, Jr.
Assistant Director and Senior Fellow
Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University
- 2:00 - 2:15 pm **Break**
- 2:15 - 3:15 pm **Obtain Gallery Passes from Member Offices**
Laura Blessing, Ph.D.
- On Your Own **Conducting Oversight in Committees (Pre-Recorded Talk)**
Elise J. Bean
Co-Director of the Levin Center
and
Former Staff Director and Chief Counsel
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

U.S. Senate

Tuesday, March 7, 2023

Room 2075
Rayburn House Office Building

8:00 - 8:30 am	Continental Breakfast
8:30 - 9:30 am	The Role of Congressional Personal Staff Mark McDevitt Chief of Staff The Honorable Lori Trahan Commonwealth of Massachusetts – 3rd District U.S. House of Representatives
9:30 - 9:45 am	Break
9:45 - 10:45 am	Partisanship in Congress: Has It Always Been This Bad? Josh Huder, Ph.D. Senior Fellow Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University
10:45 - 11:00 am	Break
11:00 - 12:00 pm	The Role of Congressional Committee Staff Sarah Bittleman Deputy Chief of Staff and Policy Director Office of Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) U.S. Senate
12:00 - 12:45 pm	Lunch
12:45 - 2:00 pm	The Budget Dilemma Laura Blessing, Ph.D.
2:00 - 2:15 pm	Break
2:15 - 4:00 pm	Principles and Priorities Workshop Laura Blessing, Ph.D.

Wednesday, March 8, 2023

Room 2075
Rayburn House Office Building

8:00 - 8:30 am	Continental Breakfast
8:30 - 9:30 am	The Senate Agenda in the 118th Congress Marianne LeVine Reporter Politico
9:30 - 10:00 am	Briefing on Committee Hearings and Markups Laura Blessing, Ph.D.
10:00 - 12:00 pm	View Committee Action
12:00 - 12:45 pm	Lunch
12:45 - 2:30 pm	Floor Procedures in the House and Senate Laura Blessing, Ph.D.
2:30 - 3:00 pm	Wrap-up Laura Blessing, Ph.D.
3:00 - 4:00 pm	Observe Floor Action in the House and Senate

Thursday, March 9, 2023

Room 2075
Rayburn House Office Building

8:00 - 8:30 am	Continental Breakfast
8:30 - 9:30 am	The Electoral Dimension Nathan Gonzales Editor and Publisher Inside Elections
9:30 - 9:45 am	Break
9:45 - 10:45 am	Money and Politics Susan Sullivan Lagon, Ph.D. Non-Resident Senior Fellow Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University
10:45 - 11:00 am	Break
11:00 - 12:00 pm	Executive Oversight and The Office of Management and Budget Austin Smythe Former Policy Director Speaker Paul Ryan
12:00 - 12:45 pm	Lunch
12:45 - 1:45 pm	The Role of Staff in the House Appropriations Committee Ben Nicholson Vice President, Government Relations L-3 Communications and Former Staff Director Subcommittee on Homeland Security Committee on Appropriations U. S. House of Representatives
1:45 - 2:00 pm	Break
2:00 - 3:00 pm	The Biden Administration and Congress Alexis Simendinger National Political Correspondent The Hill
3:00 - 3:30 pm	Wrap-up Laura Blessing, Ph.D.

Friday, March 10, 2023

Room 2075
Rayburn House Office Building

8:00 - 8:30 am	Continental Breakfast
8:30 - 9:30 am	Understanding Congressional Hearings Matt Glassman, Ph.D. Senior Fellow Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University
9:30 - 9:45 am	Break
9:45 - 10:45 am	House Party Leadership Rory Cooper Managing Director Purple Strategies and Former Deputy Chief of Staff Congressman Eric Cantor Majority Leader's Office U.S. House of Representatives
10:45 - 11:00 am	Break
11:00 - 12:00 pm	Congress and Outside Interests Mark Harkins
12:00 - 12:45 pm	Lunch
12:45 - 1:45 pm	Congress and the Media Matthew Fuller Politics Editor Daily Beast
1:45 - 2:00 pm	Break
2:00 - 2:30 pm	Fill out Course Evaluations

2:30 - 3:30 pm

A Former Member's Perspective on the Congress

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

3:30 - 4:00 pm

Wrap-up and Evaluation

Laura Blessing, Ph.D.

Course Director

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 interests include Congress, political parties, and policy (particularly tax and budget). She has taught classes at UVA (undergrad), Sweet Briar College (undergrad), and Georgetown University (graduate and undergrad) on Congress; the Presidency; Media and Politics; the Public Policy Process; and Inequality and Public Policy, as well as advising students writing their Masters theses. At GAI she teaches two research seminars: Committees and Parties in Congress and the Politics of Tax and Budget Policy. She worked on the Hill as an American Political Science Association (APSA) Congressional Fellow, serving as the legislative assistant for tax policy for a senior member of the Ways and Means Committee. She has published on the eroding budget process, tax policy in the 2016 Presidential campaign, social movements and the Presidency, and the importance of practical experience in politics informing scholarship. She has engaged in congressional testimony and other public commentary on politics in various media venues. 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.

Speaker Bios

Mark Harkins

Mark B. Harkins joined the Government Affairs Institute as a Senior Fellow in 2013. Prior to joining GAI, Mark was a senior public policy advisor at a number of law firms where he focused on the representation of corporate, nonprofit and government clients before Congress and the Executive Branch. He has extensive experience with the federal appropriations and budgeting process, as well as issues handled by the Financial Services, Science, Ways and Means, and Homeland Security Committees.

Mark came to the Hill in 1989 and worked for two Members of Congress and one Committee before taking the position of Senior Legislative Assistant to Representative David Price (D-NC), where his portfolio included appropriations. His next assignment was as Legislative Director for the Democrats to the House Science Committee. Ultimately he served as Chief of Staff for Brad Miller (D-NC).

Prior to working on Capitol Hill, he worked as Sports Information Director at Swarthmore College where he also received his BA Degree in Economics. He was once a co-owner of one of the largest fantasy sports statistics service in the United States.

Worth H. Hester, Jr.

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.

Mark McDevitt

Mark McDevitt has served as Chief of Staff to Congresswoman Lori Trahan (D-MA) since the beginning of the 117th Congress. He was previously Communications Director for Political Intelligence at global decision intelligence company Morning Consult, where he led PR strategy for the 2020 election cycle.

Prior to that, he served in political and communications roles for Congresswoman Trahan and Congressman Tim Ryan (D-OH).

A graduate of Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, Maryland Mark is a native of Reading, Pennsylvania.

Ben Nicholson

Ben Nicholson serves as the Senior Vice President for CAE's Washington Operations and is responsible for leading the strategic representation of company with global government stakeholders. In this capacity, Mr. Nicholson provides guidance on geopolitics and government priorities related to the defense and security, civil aviation and healthcare sectors, including their impact on CAE pursuits and objectives across international markets.

Prior to joining CAE, Mr. Nicholson served as a Vice President for Global Government Affairs at Honeywell and L-3 Technologies. Before he joined industry, Mr. Nicholson served 12 years on the staff of the House Appropriations Committee, including seven years as a Majority and Minority Staff Director for the Subcommittee responsible for Homeland Security Appropriations. Mr. Nicholson originally joined to the committee as a Coast Guard Fellow and served nearly 10 years in the US Coast Guard as a commissioned officer. Mr. Nicholson serves on several boards, including the boards overseeing the Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University and That Others May Live Foundation. Mr. Nicholson is a graduate of U.S. Coast Guard Academy and holds two Master's degrees from the University of Michigan.

Sarah Bittleman

Sarah Bittleman, Deputy Chief of Staff and Policy Director and Acting Chief of Staff for Senator Ron Wyden used to be the Senator's Legislative Director and Finance Committee Chief Counsel for Energy, Natural Resources and Agriculture. She came back to the Senator from the Environmental Protection Agency, where she served as Agriculture Counselor to the Administrator. Bittleman has also worked as senior adviser to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, and in a number of senior posts on Capitol Hill, including Natural Resources Counsel for Sen. Wyden as her first job for him in the 1990s. She is a graduate of Union College in Schenectady NY, Tulane Law School in New Orleans, LA, and East Carolina University in Greenville, NC.

Marianne LeVine

Marianne LeVine is a reporter at Politico who covers the Senate and previously covered lobbying while co-authoring Politico Influence. Prior to her stint on the lobbying beat, Marianne covered labor policy for Politico Pro, writing about regulations related to overtime pay, retirement advice and occupational health and safety. Her reporting in 2016 about domestic abuse allegations against President Donald Trump's first nominee for labor secretary, Andrew Puzder, was a key part of the debate surrounding his nomination, which he ultimately withdrew. Prior to working at Politico, Marianne was an intern in the Los Angeles Times' Washington, D.C. bureau.

She graduated from Stanford undergrad in 2013, with degrees in International Relations and French and completed Stanford's Graduate Program in Journalism in 2014.

Nathan Gonzales

Nathan Gonzales is Editor & Publisher of Inside Elections, which provides nonpartisan analysis of campaigns for Senate, House, governor and president. He was an editor, analyst, and writer for The Rothenberg Political Report for more than 13 years before taking over the company in 2015. Nathan is also Elections Analyst for Roll Call, the Capitol Hill newspaper, and Founder and Publisher of PoliticsinStereo.com. On Election Night 2016, Nathan was an on-air analyst for the Newshour on PBS after working as an off-air consultant for ABC NEWS on their Election Night Decision Desk for 14 years. Previously, he worked for CNN.com and as associate producer for CNN's Capital Gang. Nathan has appeared on NBC's Meet the Press and NBC Nightly News, C-SPAN's Washington Journal, CNN, and Fox News Channel, and he has been quoted in The New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, and USA Today. His work has also appeared on FiveThirtyEight, WashingtonPost.com, NBCLatino.com and in Campaigns & Elections magazine.

Nathan grew up in Oregon, earned his M.A. from the George Washington University's Graduate School of Political Management (Washington, DC) and his B.A. from Vanguard University (Costa Mesa, California). He first came to Washington, D.C. as an intern in the White House Press Office and now lives in the city with his wife and four children.

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. She has given 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 Canada 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. in Government is from Georgetown University.

Austin Smythe

Austin Smythe has over 30 years of experience working in the federal government. He most recently served as Policy Director for House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) from October 2015 to January 2019. He worked for Mr. Ryan in various capacities for 11 years. In 2015 he was the Policy Director for the House Ways and Means Committee and Staff Director for the House Budget Committee from 2007 to 2015.

Mr. Smythe's previous experience includes serving as the Executive Associate Director at the Office of Management and Budget from 2001 to 2007, working as a Vice President at Lehman Brothers for two years, and on the staff of the Senate Budget Committee for 15 years. In 2018, Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi presented Mr. Smythe with the John C. McCormack Award of Excellence for service and bipartisan dedication to the U.S. House of Representatives. In 2016, he received the Distinguished Public Service Alumni Award from the LBJ School of Public Affairs / University of Texas.

Mr. Smythe received his master's degree in Public Affairs from the LBJ School of Public Affairs and his bachelor's degree in Government from the University of Texas.

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, BBC World News, 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.

He holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in Political Science from the University of Florida, and a B.A. in Political Science and Philosophy from Rutgers University-New Brunswick.

Alexis Simendinger

Alexis Simendinger is an award-winning journalist who has covered the White House, Congress, national affairs and presidential politics for respected, nonpartisan news outlets in Washington since 1986, reporting on five presidents, including Donald Trump.

Before joining The Hill in 2017 as national political correspondent, Alexis covered the White House and President Obama for RealClearPolitics and was on the trail to report on the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections.

In 2017, she was inducted into the Society of Professional Journalists' "Hall of Fame" in Washington, along with ABC News' Martha Raddatz and Washington Post columnist Gene Weingarten, saluted for her more than two decades of excellence in reporting about the nation's capital.

For National Journal magazine, Alexis covered Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush as White House correspondent, and also reported on the Senate and national politics. She won the esteemed Aldo Beckman Memorial Award in 2008, administered by the White House Correspondents' Association, for sustained excellence in coverage of the presidency.

Early in her career, she reported for The Tampa Tribune in Florida, and covered the White House and Congress for BNA Inc.

Alexis earned a master's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri-Columbia, and her B.A. from New College in Sarasota, FL.

As a national reporter, she is a frequent guest commentator on radio and television.

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.

Rory Cooper

Rory Cooper is a veteran communications, policy and political strategist who served leadership in the House of Representatives, at the White House and in campaign committees. He is currently a Managing Director at Purple Strategies, a boutique strategy firm that brings together experts from the political and brand reputation worlds to create integrated campaigns that shape opinion and inspire action.

Prior to joining Purple Strategies, Cooper was Communications Director for U.S. House Majority Leader Eric Cantor. Previously Cooper directed communications for The Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank. Cooper also served in senior roles at the U.S. Department of Energy, and NASA.

Cooper was part of the original staff for the Office for Homeland Security at The White House following the events of September 11, 2001, and remained as a senior advisor after it became the White House Homeland Security Council. He played a central role in the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and helped author the first National Strategy for Homeland Security. Prior to 9/11, Cooper was Deputy White House Liaison for HUD Secretary Mel Martinez.

He has served in senior political roles on campaigns and campaign committees, including President Bush's 2004 re-election, and the National Republican Congressional Committee, the Republican Governors Association and on many federal, state and local efforts.

Rory is a graduate of Tulane University in New Orleans and is a native of Michigan.

Matthew Fuller

Matt Fuller is the politics editor at The Daily Beast. He previously reported on Congress for HuffPost from November 2015 until March 2021, and he reported on House leadership for Roll Call from June 2013 until October 2015. Before that, he reported on the House and Senate floor for Congressional Quarterly (CQ), as well as defense, energy, and agriculture issues there. He joined CQ in August 2010 as a researcher, after interning for Roll Call's GalleryWatch team in spring of 2009. He is a 2010 graduate of Saint Anselm College in his native New Hampshire, and in 2016, he received the Everett McKinley Dirksen Award for Distinguished Reporting of Congress for his coverage of the Freedom Caucus.

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.