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BIO represents biotechnology companies, academic institutions, state biotechnology centers and related organizations in all 50 U.S. states and 33 other nations. BIO members are involved in the research and development of health-care, agricultural, industrial and environmental biotechnology products. For more information, please visit www.bio.org.
Welcome to the BIO Grassroots Network

The Network’s objective is to ensure that key decision makers at the federal, state and local government levels understand the views and interests of BIO members.

The two major activities of the Network are establishing long-term relationships with state, local and federal officials and other key decision makers, and educating these members and decision makers about the biotechnology industry.

Public policy affects your financial bottom line. Health-care reform, drug price controls, food labeling, patent and tax law, Food and Drug Administration and Environmental Protection Agency regulations, moratoriums on genetically engineered organisms—all of these issues affect your company’s ability to raise capital, conduct research and market products. A strong Network will bolster public awareness of the industry and encourage more investment dollars. It is your constitutional right to petition your government and express your opinions; if you don’t educate your legislators regarding your company’s concerns, they may make legislative decisions that adversely impact your company. Your company will be able to express its viewpoint directly to BIO on policy decisions, and your company will stay informed of political activities in Washington, D.C., state capitals and local city councils.

“All politics is local.”
- Tip O’Neill

Advocacy Liaisons

BIO organized the Grassroots Network by asking each member company to designate an advocacy liaison (AL). The AL is the most important individual in the Network. ALs are the link between BIO in Washington, D.C., and member companies in the states. Any time the Network is mobilized, the AL is BIO’s primary point of contact. In turn, as events happen in the states, ALs notify BIO’s government relations staff, who in turn notify all other Network members. The Network is a mechanism of constant communication between BIO and the membership at large.

AL duties include: establishing relationships with your local, state and federal legislators so you can effectively advocate the industry’s views; informing and mobilizing all the affected or interested parties in your company on behalf of the industry; maintaining familiarity with policy issues affecting your company and the industry; responding to BIO Action Alerts and requests for information; informing BIO government relations staff of issues that should be addressed by the Network; and maintaining contact with BIO and BIO state affiliates while keeping tabs on the local political climate.

The Network, led by the BIO government relations staff, works to ensure that all company ALs are adequately briefed so they can speak effectively on behalf of the industry.

BIO government relations staff duties include: monitoring legislation and regulations and assessing their impact on BIO member companies; working with BIO member
companies to formulate industry positions on legislation and regulations; communicating BIO’s views to members of Congress and key decision makers; organizing and participating in coalitions for support on BIO’s issues; and informing BIO members of policy developments of interest to them.

**Your first objective as an AL** is to equip yourself with the maximum amount of information regarding public policy issues affecting the industry. Much of this material will be sent to you from BIO: *BIO News, BIO Bulletin, BIO Action Alerts,* summaries of federal and state legislation affecting biotechnology, position papers and other information. In addition, reading trade publications helps you stay up-to-date on industry issues and news.

Your second objective is establishing and maintaining relationships with your elected officials and their staffs. Federal and state legislators hold regular district meetings for constituents. Legislators are always willing to discuss matters of importance with a constituent, and are often willing to schedule individual meetings. Once you have established a relationship with a legislator and his or her staff, they may be more attentive when you contact them.

**How to get started:**

- Participate in BIO committees to learn about pending issues and help formulate BIO’s positions. Committee information can be found at www.bio.org/aboutbio/committees.asp;

- Introduce yourself to your federal and state legislators and their staffs. This can be done by requesting a meeting with the member at his or her office in Washington, at the home district office, or by inviting the legislator to tour your facility;

- Respond to BIO Action Alerts at www.bio.org/actioncenter;

- Keep the BIO Government Relations staff informed about your company’s interaction with both state and federal legislators;

- Join local, state and national associations with biotechnology interests;

- Create your own local grassroots network of employees, university researchers, suppliers and investors;

- Designate advocates at each of your company’s facility locations;

- Make sure your company is represented at local meetings and events sponsored by your legislator;

- Participate in the annual BIO Congressional Legislative Day;

- Encourage your employees to get involved in campaigns, fundraisers and other political activities.
Communicating with Elected Officials

The most valued activity of a company AL is to routinely communicate with the elected officials representing your company’s district. Your impact as an advocate will be greatly increased if you can establish personal relationships with members of both state and federal legislatures.

BIO’s Legislative Action Center is a tool for communicating with elected officials. This Internet-based tool serves as the mark of authenticity for BIO’s Grassroots Advocacy Network and is located at www.bio.org/actioncenter. It is updated with the latest federal legislative developments and news from Capitol Hill. Action Alerts provide draft letters on hot legislative topics for ALs to send their members of Congress.

Elected officials always seek expert knowledge and opinions. As you become a credible source of information, your legislator will grow to rely on you and your company.

Types of communication with elected officials: personal visits, written communication, telephone calls and political support.

“Let us never negotiate out of fear.
But let us never fear to negotiate.”
- John F. Kennedy

Personal Visits

Personal contact is the most effective form of communication. Meetings can be arranged through a legislator’s scheduler in the official’s district or Washington, D.C., office. BIO will gladly assist you in coordinating meetings with your legislators.

District meetings are sometimes more effective than meetings in Washington, because they highlight your identity as a constituent. Also, a member may be less distracted in the district office than on Capitol Hill.

Another effective place to meet with your legislator is at your facility. Facility tours allow legislators to see firsthand what your company does and to meet your employees. It’s important for legislators to get to know their constituents, and a tour helps them meet that objective.

You can invite legislators to ribbon-cuttings or other company events, such as employee picnics, investor meetings or board of directors meetings. Make sure your legislator knows how your company is doing.
**Tips to remember:**

- **Make an appointment.** Contact your legislator’s scheduler to arrange an appointment. If you want to arrange a meeting in the district, then call the district office scheduler; if you want to meet in Washington, contact the member’s D.C. office. You may be asked to send or fax a meeting request letter. Use an initial brief meeting to build your relationship for later, more substantive meetings.

- **Be prepared.** Know the purpose of your meeting and prepare accordingly. Know your member’s political history, committee assignments and past positions on key issues (if necessary, BIO can provide you with historical information). Try to anticipate questions and prepare your answers. If you don’t know an answer, promise to follow up, and do so quickly.

- **Establish meeting objectives.** Establish meeting objectives so you can gauge the effectiveness of your meeting, as well as the nature of any future meetings. A checklist of what you expect to accomplish is helpful. Always ask yourself, “What do I want to be decided at this meeting?”

- **Manage group meetings.** When you meet as part of a group, designate a group spokesperson. It is helpful for the group to meet and agree on a strategy prior to seeing the legislator.

- **Remind the legislator who you are and whom you represent.** Always frame your discussions in terms of the interests of your company and the biotechnology industry as a whole. Effective subjects include amount of taxes paid, constituents on the payroll and new jobs created.

- **Be truthful. Never mislead a legislator.** Your credibility and that of the entire industry are on the line.

- **Use “leave-behinds.”** Leave behind a written statement for them to consult later (printed on letterhead with a contact name, company and address), and send an additional copy of the leave-behind with your thank-you letter.

- **Follow up.** Follow up the meeting with a thank-you letter.

- **Maintain the relationship.** Continue communicating with your member’s office to establish a long-term relationship.

- **Contact BIO.** Please keep BIO apprised of all contact; we will be able to reinforce your efforts.
Written Communication

Although personal visits are the most effective form of communication, they may not always be possible. In these instances, it is effective to write your legislator.

Helpful hints:

- **Use company letterhead.** Always use company letterhead with an address to remind your member that you are a constituent.

- **State the reason for your communication.** State your reason at the beginning of the letter. The remainder of the letter should support your initial statement.

- **Be clear and succinct.** A letter should be limited to one subject, as multiple subjects will detract from your message. Keep it brief.

- **Avoid form letters.** Although BIO will request that you write a letter on behalf of your company and may even provide you with discussion points or a sample letter, it is important that you make sure your letter is company specific. Talk about your corporate vision, your research, your finances and your employees.

- **Attitude is important.** Your letter should be civil and reasonable, but you should make sure your point is conveyed. Critical comments should be constructive. Propose alternatives whenever possible instead of just opposing a measure.

- **Electronic messages.** When addressing an e-mail to an elected official, the message should include your name and complete mailing address.

- **Write thank-you letters.** When your legislators have done a service for the industry, such as voting favorably on a key issue or writing a letter to a federal agency, thank them in writing.

- **Always copy BIO on all correspondence.** This allows BIO’s Government Relations staff to augment your efforts here in Washington.

- **Maintain regular communications.** Send copies of annual reports, scientific advances and other notable information to your legislators regularly.

“The basis of our political system is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government.”

- George Washington
**Addressing correspondence:**

**To a U.S. senator:**

The Honorable [John Doe]
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
Dear Senator [Doe]:

**To a state senator:**

The Honorable [John Doe]
Florida Senate
Tallahassee, FL 32399
Dear Senator [Doe]:

**To a U.S. representative:**

The Honorable [John Doe]
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
Dear Congressman or Congresswoman [Doe]:

**To a state representative:**

The Honorable [John Doe]
Florida House of Representatives
Tallahassee, FL 32399
Dear Representative [Doe]:

When the congressional representative is a committee chairperson or Speaker of the House, the opening salutation should read:

Dear Mr. Chairman:  
or  
Dear Madam Chairwoman:  
or  
Dear Mr./Madam Speaker:  
(State legislators, mayors and other elected officials are also addressed as “The Honorable.”)

“I always look forward to hearing from my constituents, especially small business owners. Their views carry a lot of weight in helping me decide how I am going to vote on the Senate floor.”

- Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS)
Telephone Contacts

At times it is necessary to contact your member of Congress by phone. When calling a member’s office, you will most likely be routed to a staff member. You should talk with staff, but you can politely insist that the member call you back as well.

Reminders when calling your legislators:

- **Identify yourself and your company.** When you contact your legislator’s offices, make it clear you are a constituent.

- **State the reason for your call.** Make sure you are prepared to clearly communicate your position.

- **Explain how the issue affects your company.** Describe the impact of a bill or position on your company and employees.

- **Focus.** Discuss one issue per phone conversation.

- **Ask your member to take a supportive position.** A member may not take a position unless you ask him or her to do so.

- **Find out your member’s position.** If the legislator agrees with your position, let your member know you are pleased and ask if he or she would consider taking a leadership position on it and/or cosponsoring a piece of legislation. If the member disagrees with your position, politely express disappointment and offer to present supporting documentation for your views (use BIO as a resource for any materials you need).

- **Use correct facts and figures.** Make sure any facts and figures you use are accurate.

- **Say thank-you.** Close your conversation by thanking your member or the staff person for taking the time to speak with you.

- **Follow up.** Always follow up with written communication stating your company’s and the industry’s viewpoint.

Political Support

All public officials are politicians, and they need your political support and help. Politicians will seek your company’s support in many ways. Your company should seriously consider getting involved in these political activities: providing employees with campaign volunteer information; making financial contributions to re-election campaigns; and serving on a policy or issues committee. Make sure you comply with all federal and state election laws by checking with the Federal Election Commission at www.fec.gov.
Setting Up a Company Tour for Your Legislators

BIO urges member companies to invite legislators and their staff to tour biotechnology facilities. Such tours help explain the comprehensive research and development involved in all facets of biotechnology—health care, agriculture, environmental and industrial. Congressional tours provide an opportunity to discuss legislative issues that affect the biotech industry. Setting up a congressional tour is not difficult; however, attending to the details is critical. BIO is happy to help you accomplish this important goal.

Information: What message are you going to convey?

Determine the message you want to deliver to members of Congress. Find the person(s) in your company who will be most effective in delivering your message. A tour of your laboratories is always an effective way to give the participants a new research perspective. Also, try to include a hands-on experiment or activity.

Timing: Where Do I Start?

Choose a date for the tour. Congressional recesses are the best time to plan trips. BIO can provide you with recommended times for such tours during the year. In addition, make sure your CEO is available. Decide whether a combined effort with other companies in your area would be more effective to demonstrate the strength of biotech in the community. Talk to your state biotech association or BIO for company information and contacts.

“Democratic institutions are never done; they are like living tissue, always a-making.”

- Woodrow Wilson
Whom Should I Invite?

Invite members of Congress and/or their staff. Remember that federal lawmakers have staff both in Washington, D.C., and in the district. Avoid partisanship. Invite both Republicans and Democrats; it is important to create personal relationships with lawmakers and their staff regardless of their political affiliation or yours. In addition, consider inviting members on Senate and House committees/subcommittees that have legislative authority over your business. A few important committees are:

- Senate Committees: Appropriations; Finance; Judiciary; Health, Education, Labor and Pensions; Energy and Natural Resources; and Environment and Public Works
- House Committees: Energy and Commerce; Judiciary; Science; Ways and Means; Agriculture; and Resources

“Public offices were not made for private convenience.”

- Thomas Jefferson

Other Issues to Consider: Draft a schedule (be realistic and reserve extra time for traveling to meetings and food breaks). Before the tour, brief congressional participants on the company they will be visiting—issues, interests, sales, etc. Call all staff to get a final count and remind them of exact meeting times and locations. Make a list of participants, addresses, names, titles, phone and fax numbers. Provide “leave behind” packets with background facts, important presentation slides, contact information and agenda. Make name tags for staff and presenters. Take photographs. Reserve transportation and lodging (if applicable). Order food and refreshments. If you are paying for travel expenses or you plan to offer a gift, call the House and/or Senate Ethics Committee for approval.

- House Standards of Official Conduct (Ethics) Committee (202) 225-7103
- Senate Select Committee on Ethics (202) 224-2981

Post Tour: If applicable, fill out your portion of the ethics forms and send to congressional staff, keeping a copy for your own records. Send thank-you notes and additional information to congressional staff. Send them a photo as a keepsake.
The Legislative Process

Introduction of a Federal Bill

Any member of Congress may introduce a bill at any time Congress is in session. Literally thousands of bills are introduced annually, most never moving beyond introduction. Once offered, a bill is assigned a House or Senate bill number corresponding with the body in which it was introduced. Subsequently, the measure will be referred to committees with jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in the bill.

The Committee Process

A bill is first referred to standing committees (i.e., permanent committees with broad jurisdiction) in Congress. Standing committees usually refer bills to subcommittees that have expertise in specific areas. After the subcommittee has heard testimony from all parties concerned, it may choose to “mark-up” the bill, effectively editing it, and voting on the measure. If it is voted out favorably, it is returned to the originating standing (or full) committee. The full committee may also choose to “mark-up” and vote on the bill. If the bill is voted out favorably by the full committee, it is referred to the House/Senate floor for consideration.

Floor Debate and Vote

When a bill reaches the floor of the House or Senate, time is given to both parties to debate the merits of the bill, and then by a majority vote, the bill is passed or defeated. Amendments may or may not be considered depending on how the bill is brought up for consideration.

Referral to Other Chamber and Conference

Once a bill is passed by one chamber, it is referred to the other chamber. The committee, debate and voting processes are similar in both the House and Senate. If one chamber adopts a different version of the same bill, the Senate and House must convene a conference between both chambers to reconcile the differences and develop a consensus bill. The conference bill must then be approved by both chambers and then forwarded to the president.

The President

The approved bill is sent to the president with four possible outcomes: (1) the president signs the bill and it becomes law; (2) the president does not sign the bill within 10 days (while Congress is in session), and it becomes law; (3) the president vetoes the bill (Congress can override a veto with a two-thirds roll-call vote of both chambers); (4) if the president does not sign the bill within 10 days after Congress has adjourned its second session, the bill dies ("pocket veto").

(Federal and state legislative processes are very similar. Each state and local government process is somewhat different, and BIO can provide guidance and instruction on individual state and local processes.)
Glossary of Legislative Terms

**Act** - A bill after it becomes law (by being passed by both houses of Congress and signed by the president, or after the president’s veto is overridden). Although confusing, a proposed law is often referred to as “The XYZ Act” because this is the name it will have if it becomes law.

**Amendment** - A proposal by a member of Congress to alter the language of a bill, act, other amendment or the Constitution.

**Appropriation** - The funds set aside by Congress from the Treasury for a specific government expenditure.

**Authorization Bill** - A law creating or sustaining a program and outlining its funding. Following authorization, an appropriation (see above) approves withdrawal of funds from the Treasury.

**Bill** - A proposed law. Identical bills introduced in both houses are called “companion bills.”

**Budget** - The president’s annual proposal to Congress outlining federal expenditures and revenue for the coming fiscal year, which begins October 1.

**Budget Authority** - Allows federal agencies to incur a financial liability. The basic types of budget authority are appropriations, contract authority and borrowing authority.

**Budget Resolution** - House and Senate passed guidelines, and later caps, on budget authority and outlays. A budget resolution is not submitted to the president for signature because it is considered a matter of internal congressional guidelines. Bills that would exceed budget caps are subject to point of order, although waivers have been granted regularly in both houses.

**Cloture** - Closing off debate. The Senate put an end to unlimited debate in 1917 when it provided that two-thirds of those present might invoke the “rule of cloture” and set a time limit for discussion. In 1975, support necessary for cloture was changed to three-fifths of the entire Senate. In 1979, a 100-hour cap on debate was imposed after cloture was invoked to limit the use of delaying amendments.

**Committee of the Whole** - A parliamentary device frequently employed by the House to simplify its operations while debating pending legislation.
Conference Committee - Selected members of the House and Senate tasked with resolving differences between similar bills passed independently by the House and Senate. The Speaker of the House and the Senate Majority Leader appoint conferees. By tradition, they usually appoint majority and minority members in a five-to-two ratio from the committee that had jurisdiction over the legislation.

Congressional Record - A daily report of congressional happenings and, except for executive sessions, more-or-less verbatim record of floor debate (members may revise their remarks before publication). Its appendix contains material not spoken by members of Congress on the House or Senate floor but published by permission (“extensions of remarks”).

Continuing Resolution - A joint (both houses of Congress) appropriations measure providing interim funding for agencies whose regular appropriations bills have not yet been passed.

Executive Session - A meeting closed to the public, often because classified or other sensitive information is being discussed.

Field Hearing - Committee or subcommittee hearings held off Capitol Hill.

Floor - Forum in each house of Congress where members introduce, debate and vote on legislation. When a bill “comes to the floor” or is “on the floor,” either the full House or the full Senate is considering it.

Germane - Relevant to pending legislation. In the House, proposed amendments must be germane to the bill or law they would amend. The Senate usually imposes no such requirement.

Hearings - Meetings by committees and subcommittees to hear testimony from witnesses in support of, or in opposition to, legislation.

Markup - The process by which a committee or subcommittee amends legislation to prepare it for consideration on the House or Senate floor.

Motion - A request by a member to institute any one of a wide array of parliamentary actions. The outcome of a motion is decided by a vote.

“No man is good enough to govern another man without that other’s consent.”

- Abraham Lincoln
**Point of Order** - An objection by a member that the pending matter or proceeding is in violation of the rules. The presiding officer accepts or rejects the objection, subject to appeal by the full House or Senate. The power of the presiding officer to rule on points of order is stronger in the House than the Senate.

**Political Action Committee (PAC)** - A committee formed by special interest groups to raise money and make contributions to the campaigns of selected political candidates.

**Quorum** - A majority of members of Congress duly chosen and sworn in—in the absence of deaths or resignations: 218 in the House (100 when the House is in Committee of the Whole) and 51 in the Senate. A quorum is necessary to conduct business. Senators may object to the absence of a quorum at almost any time, which makes “quorum calls” a frequent part of Senate parliamentary tactics.

**Rider** - An unrelated item that is attached to a bill so the item may “ride” to approval. Because the Senate does not usually require that a rider be germane to its host bill, riders are more common in that body than in the House.

**Suspension of the Rules** - A time-saving procedure for considering legislation in the House, usually used in the case of noncontroversial bills. Time for debate is restricted to a total of 40 minutes, and no amendments are allowed on the floor. A two-thirds majority of those present and voting is required for passage.

**Tabling Motion** - A proposal to remove a bill from immediate consideration. Often used to kill a measure.

**Unanimous Consent** - By unanimous consent, almost any ruling in the House or Senate can be waived for specific purposes. In addition, the Senate relies on unanimous consent agreements to define legislative ground rules for particular measures. The House uses unanimous consent agreements relatively sparingly, usually to adopt a noncontroversial measure.

**Veto** - Presidential refusal to sign legislation passed by the House and Senate. A veto can be overridden by two-thirds vote of both houses. (A pocket veto occurs when the legislative session ends before conclusion of the ten-day period, excluding Sundays, granted to the president to sign or veto legislation, and the president has done neither.)
Publication of the BIO Grassroots Handbook was made possible by the generous support of Allergan, Inc.