

Welcome and Intro to Aid on the Hill



- Grassroots, non-partisan, group of 450+ volunteers made up of current and former USAID staff (DH, ISCs, PSCs) and IPs
- Draw upon our deep inside knowledge of the agency, the development sector, and development work on the ground around the world.
- Work alongside large coalition of advocacy groups including OneAID, USGLC, etc.



AOTH Objectives and How to Find Us

A screenshot of the AID on the Hill website. The header is dark blue with the logo on the left and navigation links "About", "Get Involved", "Contact", and a search icon on the right. The main content area has a dark blue background with the headline "Save Statutes, Save Funding, and Save Expertise" in white. Below the headline is a paragraph of text and a white "Learn More" button.

Save Statutes, Save Funding, and Save Expertise

Aid on the Hill is a bipartisan grassroots group of foreign assistance professionals. Having served at USAID and at public, private, local, and faith-based implementing partners, Aid on the Hill brings a realistic, insider's perspective on how foreign assistance operates day-to-day.

[Learn More](#)

A screenshot of the AID on the Hill website showing a "Hill Update" section and two blue boxes with mission and call-to-action text. The "Hill Update" section has three tabs: "Hill Update" (selected), "New Case Study", and "Next Action". The update text mentions a House vote on June 12th and a Senate vote on July 18th, with a "Contact Congress" button. The "Our mission" box states the goal is to engage Congress to ensure U.S. foreign assistance reflects American values. The "Call your Member of Congress" box encourages email, call, or meeting with representatives and senators.

Hill Update

On June 12th, the House passed the rescission package that includes \$9.4 billion in foreign assistance funding.

The Senate plans to vote on the measure July 18th.

[Contact Congress](#)

Our mission

Engage Congress to ensure U.S. foreign assistance reflects American values and remains a powerful force for global stability, economic growth, and national security.

Call your Member of Congress

Email, call, or meet with your Representatives and Senators to discuss your concerns.

Website:

aidonthehill.org

And follow on:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Bluesky](#)

Email: congressaidletters@gmail.com

***Local Advocacy:
Communicating the
Importance of Foreign
Assistance to American
Communities***

Aug 5, 2025



Barriers to Advocacy - What Stops Us?

Cutting the Caution Tape to Engage Your Audience

- Americans are reluctant to talk about politics and religion. 'Political' talk is seen as toxic and non-productive in the current environment.
- Part of America is not only divided but tribal, viewing others with anger, distrust and derision. Much of the media on both sides promotes this view.
- Many of us live in media 'bubbles'.
- In this environment it is frightening to try to reach out to others.
- Much of what passes as outreach is venting which makes the situation worse and reinforces that reaching out is not advisable.



Reasons For Hope

Values & Fact

- Little evidence that American values have changed. Most continue to believe we should help people in other countries, even apart from benefits to America.
- Political division is rooted in different sets of facts, not values. Each side is exposed to different 'facts'.
- >80% despair of the division and seek a way out.
- Approaching others in a venting fashion is unproductive. But there are other ways to do this that are effective by being respectful and not critical



Am I an Advocate?

Why be a local advocate.

- Sidestep the media bubble
- Civility rules apply
- Greater acceptance
- Non-verbal communication



Methods for (Safely) Reaching Out

- **Who to reach out to?**

- Begin with established religious and civic organizations.. Existing organizations are relatively easy to gather an audience and potentially take action. Start with groups you are not affiliated with.
- Contact the local pastor/minister/president etc. Meet in person and emphasize a non-political discussion. Ie, not partisan. Explore what approaches and topics (if any) the group has expressed interest in and particularly overseas projects they have supported.
 - Consult the existing [Local Advocacy folder](#) and use it to generate local versions based on the area you live in.
 - Generate a flyer emphasizing that this is informative and non-partisan; a chance to meet a local person with foreign assistance experience.



Meeting Approach



- **Summary of basic approach (see folder for details)**

- Introduce yourself and your career in foreign assistance in detail, emphasizing the reasons for your choice of career.
- Avoid talking about past events and closure of USAID, as this fuels disputes over past facts.
- Avoid criticizing any person or group or actions, or stating that any person or fact is wrong. Be respectful.
- Focus on what foreign assistance can do in the future based on past successes. Mention various areas in which USAID worked but focus stories and statistics on your own area, particularly activities you observed or were involved in.
- Acknowledge the need for improvement in how foreign assistance is done but emphasize that reform rather than demolition is more appropriate.

Best Practices During the Meeting

- **Each meeting will have a different cadence**

- Leave plenty of time for questions
- Restrict disputation to responses to questions: ie, counter misinformation only when it is raised.
- Avoid statements of ‘that is wrong’ but instead say ‘this is what has been reported/this is what I have observed.’
- Avoid telling people to change their mind or think in a certain way. Instead frame the conversation as your own observations and that of colleagues, to inform respondents’ thinking.



Next Steps



- **Make an ask of the group**

- Ask all to write/call their member of congress to advocate for foreign assistance, acknowledging that the administration has not followed up on its promised actions (reference letter of support in the Local Advocacy folder).
- Continue to meet with interested persons in this group and invite them to reach out to others in the organization not present.
- Reach out to other potentially interested groups connected to this group.



Feel free to contact me and to join an emerging network of folks who are beginning to do this - to provide support, feedback, connections, and motivation.

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