

# Navigating the Legislative Process:

Insights from the Mather Policy Internship

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Congressman Andrews' Intern Coordinator: Vince Sarubbi

# The Mather Policy Internship



Dr. John Mather pictured with the 2012 Mather Interns, Allen Scheie and myself, Jonathan Morris

- Dr. John Mather received the 2006 Nobel Prize in Physics for his work with Dr. George Smoot on the Cosmic Background Explorer Satellite.
- He used part of the prize's monetary award to establish an undergraduate internship program with AIP modeled after the Congressional Fellowships program for recent Ph.D recipients.
- "The aim of the program is to promote awareness of the policy process among young scientists by directly engaging them in the work that goes on in the federal government." – AIP Executive Director Fred Dylla

# The Legislative Office of Congressman Robert E. Andrews



- I spent the summer working with the Legislative Office of Congressman Robert E. Andrews.
- Represents the First District of New Jersey: Camden, Haddon Heights, and the Eastern Suburbs of Philadelphia.

## House of Representatives Committee Assignments:

### Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

Panel on Defense Acquisition Reform (Ranking Member)

### Committee on Education and the Workforce

Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce,

Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions

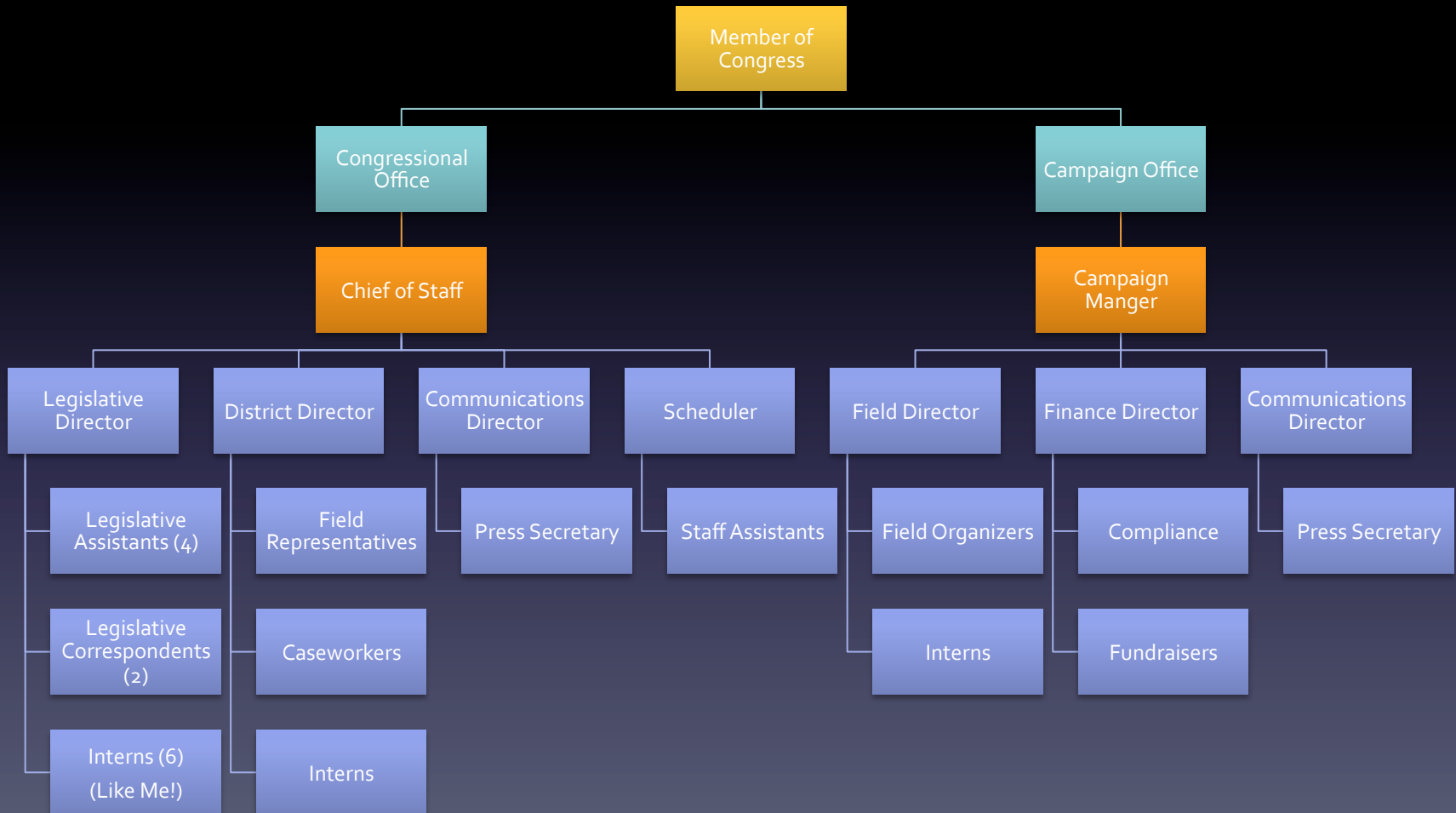
(Ranking Member)

# The House Office Building Complex



Courtesy of the Architect of the Capitol and the Capitol Visitor Center

# Congressional Office Structure



# Intern Duties

- Greet Constituents and Visitors  
(aka Lobbyists)
- Answer the Phones
- Sort the Mail and Faxes  
(Pictured at Right)
- Run Errands (FedEx, Franking)
- Print/Copy/Fax
- Process Tour Requests for  
the White House and the Capitol
- Process Flag Requests
- Draft Correspondence
- Draft Statements for the Congressional Record
- Conduct Legislative Research



# Tours

- Constituents schedule tours of the Capitol and the White House through their Representatives' Offices.
- Some offices have interns give the tours, and some rely on Capitol Visitor Center Staff.





# Drafting Correspondence

**ROBERT E. ANDREWS**

FIRST DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

COMMITTEES:

**EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE**

**RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
HEALTH, EMPLOYMENT, LABOR  
AND PENSIONS (HELP)**

**MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
AND WORKFORCE TRAINING**

**ARMED SERVICES**

**MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS  
AND CAPABILITIES**

**RANKING MEMBER, PANEL ON DEFENSE ACQUISITION REFORM**

**MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT  
AND INVESTIGATIONS**

**Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3001**

PLEASE REPLY TO:

2265 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-6501

515 GROVE STREET  
3RD FLOOR, SUITE 3C  
HADDON HEIGHTS, NJ 08035  
(856) 546-5100

63 NORTH BROAD STREET  
WOODBURY, NJ 08098  
(856) 546-5100

WEBSITE:

[www.house.gov/andrews](http://www.house.gov/andrews)

July 30, 2012

Jordan Burroughs  
c/o United States Olympic Committee  
1100 H Street, NW, Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Burroughs,

I write to extend to you my sincerest congratulations for making the 2012 US Olympic Team. Enclosed, please find a statement which I submitted into the Congressional Record expressing South Jersey's pride in your achievements.



# Congressional Record Statements



United States  
of America

## Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE *112<sup>th</sup>* CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

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### *House of Representatives*

July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor our South Jersey Olympians: Tamika Catchings, basketball; Rachael Dawson, field hockey; Michelle Vittese, field hockey; Jordan Burroughs, wrestling; and Steve Kasprzyk, rowing. They have traveled to London to compete in the 2012 Summer Olympic Games.

These athletes will represent the United States on the world stage, and serve as role models for citizens across South Jersey and the entire nation. Their success, derived from hard work and

# Legislative Research

## Scaling Up Manufacturing (SUM) Act Summary

- SUM is a proposal to use tax credits to invest in American manufacturing.
- In general, the SUM Act would create a tax credit valued at 25% of the expenditures of qualifying start-up companies used to construct manufacturing facilities.
- Qualifications for eligible business include:
  - Headquartered and managed in the United States
  - Must have no existing manufacturing facilities
  - Must manufacture a tangible product
  - Must be a start-up company (Definition: Gross Receipts and Research Expenses for fewer than 3 years)
  - Must have a B or better credit rating
- Qualified Facility Construct Expenditures:
  - Must be to manufacture a product with demonstrated commercial viability
  - Facility must be placed in service within 5 years

Here is an example of a memo detailing the provisions of proposed legislation: the essence is to get the detail across on simplest terms.

It was introduced in the House as H.R. 6120, by Congressman Michael Honda, and has ten cosponsors. None of them sit on the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Select Revenue Measures.

# Walk and Talk



Dr. John Holdren advising President Obama – a classic example of ‘Walk and Talk’  
Photo Courtesy of the Office of Science and Technology Policy

# Contacting Your Representative

- Interns are the first point of contact in the triage process. Their first indicator: Are you a constituent?
- Constituent letters, emails, and faxes are logged by batch into a database.
  - Generally, offices will receive many of the same form letter. There is software that identifies similar language in these letters and groups it. Thousands of emails can be processed in a few clicks.
- Calls reach the interns first and require a bit more thought and effort than batching form letter emails from the Congressional website.
  - Many callers express their wish for their Representative to support or vote for a specific piece of legislation. These are logged into a database.

# Getting Your Input to the Right Spot

- If you can cite specific policy research, polling data, or other evidence to back up an argument your call is more effective.
  - Congressional Staff have a pretty good idea of what constituents desire.
- If you have input that would benefit an LA, the intern will want to pass it along.
  - They might ask you to email the LA or if the LA is available, transfer you to them.
- Tasked with triaging everything from insults directed towards the Member from outside the district to calls from the Member's wife asking when they will be home, interns are valued by how appropriately they can discern valuable calls.
  - If you can't sell them on it, your representative won't be able to sell it to Congress or your district.

# Takeaway: Navigate the Process Correctly to Maximize Your Effectiveness

- Your information is only valuable if it reaches the right person.
- The intern at the front desk is tasked with triaging calls.
- Remember, most are volunteering because they care about making the country a better place.
- Make an ally with your first impression: it gets passed along each rung in the ladder by body language, tone of voice, etc when the intern pitches your input to a LA.
- Don't be slighted if an LA isn't available – if you get their email and can send a policy report, research paper, or poll and provide an executive summary with the major points they can cite when they advise your Representative, you're making them more effective at their job and they genuinely value the help.

Look for an article in Physics  
Today!



# America is Self Governing

- For better or for worse, the United States is self governing.
- Present it correctly, and your ideas, support, and evidence will help.
- America Needs You



Photo Courtesy of Todd Cain Benson

# Acknowledgements

- Dr. John Mather
- AIP and SPS
  - Especially Jennifer Greenamoyer, Bo Hammer, and Kendra Redmond
- Congressman Andrews
  - Legislative Correspondent Vincent Sarubbi