



ROUNDTABLE GUIDELINES AND MATERIALS

CLIMATE ROUNDTABLES

THIS GUIDE COURTESY
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CONGRESS ACTION FUND



DEAR PROGRESSIVE COLLEAGUE,

This packet from is designed to make it simple for CPC Members, local allies, and PDA members to organize events around the need for our government to fight climate change and the inherent importance these efforts have for all communities throughout the country.

These events are meant to connect community members and progressive allies with their Congressional Representatives to discuss climate change and its economic impact, as well as to help Members capture compelling video and stories from their constituents so that the CPC can ensure their voices are heard. Inside are materials to help Members and staff run a successful event and to bring constituent voices back to Washington.

We hope to capture the stories of those affected by climate change and those who will be affected by climate change should we, as a country, continue on our current path. These stories are both powerful and moving and must be placed at the center of our national debate.

Republicans in Washington have a single-minded focus on debt and deficits. We need your help to continue the success that the CPC has had in ensuring investments in our infrastructure and in fighting climate change and its effects. These events will help to provide the ammunition needed inside Congress to do just that and will help Members of Congress to address the nexus between growing the economy and climate change.

Help us shift the dialogue in Washington by giving a voice to the millions of Americans crying out for Washington to take action against the devastating potential of climate change!



EVENT LOGISTICS

DESIGN:

Events are **Roundtables** with 15-25 participants to discuss the issue of climate change and communities.

VENUES:

Venues are generally chosen on local availability and the feasibility for 15-25 individuals to speak in a roundtable format on the issues. Often, schools, churches, and community facilities (or local businesses willing to donate their medium to large sized conference rooms) can be relied upon for hosting these events.

Venues are selected on a number of requirements including the need for space for post-event media coverage.

SECURITY:

Security is not required, but basic security is suggested due to Congressional participation. For most roundtables featuring a single Member of Congress, low level building security already present should be sufficient. For larger events featuring a number of Members of Congress, greater levels of security will be required. Security is highly dependent on the individual event and the Member. When in doubt, ask the Member of Congress's office what level of security their Member is comfortable with.





STAGING: (IMPORTANT)

Staging of events depends entirely upon the venue chosen for an event. However, there are some general guidelines which help guide the staging across all venues. **Primarily: The aim of these events is to provide a roundtable discussion for local communities to connect and engage with a Member of Congress about how Congress can engage in protecting our environment.**

GUIDELINES:

- **ROUNDTABLES**—Events should be roundtables in design. Generally speaking, this means people sitting around a conference table in order to speak as equals. **The the Member of Congress should sit at the head or center of the conference table.**
- **SIZE**—Around 15-25 people should be expected to attend each roundtable. Events should fit the room they are housed in. The room should feel full when all guests arrive.
- **MODERATOR**—All events should have one person designated as the principal moderator and host. This person will convene the meeting, begin general introductions, introduce the Member of Congress, and get the discussion started.
 - In addition, they should work from the agenda and messaging document to keep the roundtable on track.
 - The moderator should let the momentum of the group flow and allow the Member of Congress to control the general pace of the roundtable.
 - The principal role of the moderator is to get the event started, keep the event on course, and help to ensure the event ends smoothly and on time. Remember, a Member of Congress is rigidly scheduled and will have a number of engagements that day. They may offer to stay beyond their booked time, but please be respectful of their time and schedule. If the Member of Congress brings a staff person, listen to their guidance.
- **MATERIALS**—Materials brought by organizers and participants should be collected at a table at the entrance of the event. In the interest of time, participants should avoid handing out materials during the roundtable itself. However, bringing materials is highly encouraged.
- **REFRESHMENTS**—Water, at least, should be available to all participants at the roundtable. Water should absolutely be made available to the moderator and Member of Congress. Additional food is often encouraged, but not required for a roundtable. Should more refreshments be made available, please be mindful of the GSA requirements limiting the cost of such refreshments, which are variable by city and state.



SAMPLE AGENDA

Based on a one hour event. Please adjust to fit the duration of your event.

Below is a sample agenda for moderators to use during these events. This should be adjusted to reflect the requirements on the ground and needs of the event. Please use this only as general guidelines for steering the event.

Times are designed as the event beginning at hour 00:00 (hours:minutes). Negative times are meant to be done prior to the start of the event.

-01:00 (ONE HOUR PRIOR) SETUP

Organizers arrive and setup—This includes the setup of tables, chairs, water, other refreshments, and tables for documents or other requirements. This time is reserved to make sure everything is in order prior to any guests arriving.

-00:30 (THIRTY MINUTES PRIOR) VENUE OPENS

Venue doors open—Participants should be invited to arrive 30 minutes prior to the official start of the event. This will allow for guests to arrive in a timely manner and have time for small talk prior to the event starting. Setup of the event should also be concluded thirty minutes prior to start. The Member of Congress will arrive sometime in this window, likely very close to official start time. Ideally, the room should be full prior to the arrival of the Member of Congress.

00:00 EVENT BEGINS

Moderator call to order—As close to the official start time as possible, the moderator should call the event to order and begin introductions.

00:00 - 00:15 INTRODUCTIONS

Moderator Introductions—The first 15 minutes of the event should be dedicated to brief introductions. First with the moderator, then the Member of Congress, and then all the participants to the roundtable. Remind participants to be brief.

00:15 - 00:45 ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Moderator and Member lead roundtable—The moderator should quickly transition into a roundtable discussion setting the tone of discussion for the roundtable by inviting the Member to offer comments and then helping to moderate a discussion between attendees. Please refer to the rules for moderation in regards to how to help supplement conversation and discussion.

00:45 - 1:00 FINAL COMMENTS & CLOSING

Moderator begins to move to final thoughts—The moderator will often have to help conclude the event by transitioning to final thoughts and closing statements. This will often begin with the moderator offering a brief summary of what has come out of the discussion and a reminder about what the next steps after the event may be. The moderator should then offer concluding statements to the Member of Congress present.



RULES FOR MODERATION

RULES OF THE ROAD:

90 SECOND RULE

- All attendees who wish to speak at the beginning of the event should be limited to 90 seconds to allow for all participants to speak.
- This also allows for a flow of discussion and keeps any one individual from dominating the conversation.
- The moderator should make it clear that “We want to give everyone a chance to speak,” in order to help enforce this policy.
- Following everyone’s opening statements and once the discussion is well under way, this rule will become more lax.

STAY ON TOPIC

- Those speaking should be made aware that they must stay on topic.
- This means that steering participants towards the main topics included in the messaging documents.
- If any issue arises, the strategies listed above should be used to keep the speakers on topic.
- The moderator should not be afraid to interrupt and kindly remind individuals to stay on topic.
- Instituting a 90 second rule will help to ensure participants stay on topic. The moderator should include this in their opening remarks.

AVOID THE AWKWARD SILENCE

Oftentimes, a moderator will need to spark conversation for the group in order to avoid the awkward silence that sometimes happens when a floor is opened to discussion and comments.

- The moderator can use their ‘moderator’s prerogative’ to get the conversation flowing.
- Prepare a couple of participants by asking them to bring up specific questions or points. Ask and inform them about this prior to the event. Then direct questions or conversations to these individuals whenever an ‘awkward silence’ may start.
- Ask pointed questions you know people in the audience feel strongly about. As the moderator, you know this audience better than anyone else. Do not be inflammatory, but bring out the passions you know the participants have.



VIDEO & PHOTOGRAPHY

- During events, taking photos and video is encouraged. But all participants, and especially the Member of Congress, should be made aware of what level of exposure is planned.
- Do not plan to take video or record the event without notifying the Member of Congress and their staff about your intent to do this.
- Taking photos after the event is highly encouraged and always welcome. Please share these with the Member of Congress's office. They are very excited to meet with your group and love having photos of these events for their records as well.
- If media is going to be present, please let the Member know in advance. Media at these roundtables can be very beneficial, but no party should ever be surprised about the presence of journalists, nor should they find out that media is present when they arrive. In addition, consider that media presence during a roundtable may inhibit the candor of participants.

