



## August Recess Packet

Dear NAFIS Member:

August is upon us and Congress is embarking on its annual month-long recess. For advocates, August is about setting the stage for our work once Congress returns in September. This fall, there are major issues on the table, most importantly, critical decisions regarding Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 funding. The Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittees on Labor-Health and Human Services-Education have both passed funding bills for FY 2017.

Because of our collective voices:

- the Administration's proposal to eliminate Federal Properties funding was rejected in both chambers;
- the House provided a \$23 million increase for Basic Support;
- the Senate provided a \$10 million increase for Basic Support and a \$2 million increase for Federal Properties.

We cannot afford to waste this month and lose traction on achieving our goal of securing the highest possible funding increase in the final legislation: \$23 million for Basic Support and \$2 million for Federal Properties.

Part of your responsibility as an Impact Aid advocate is to educate and develop relationships with your representatives in Congress and their staff. Building these relationships allows you to educate your legislators about the importance of Impact Aid and be a better advocate for the program. Enclosed is the information to guide your activities during this extended district work period. If we all rally together, NAFIS is confident our efforts will produce results.

We hope the first few weeks back to school go smoothly and look forward to seeing you at the NAFIS Fall Conference.

### Meeting with Congress at "Home"

Often, it is more productive to meet representatives in your district than in DC. Everyone is on home turf and the hustle and bustle of DC is miles away. Here are a few tips to assist you in arranging local meetings and using the time during August recess wisely:

1. Schedule the meeting in advance: Call the local district office to schedule a visit or inquire about public office hours in advance. Be prepared to specify the meeting topic.
2. Suggest a group meeting: If a group of advocates are present, it demonstrates your concern about an issue is shared by other constituents. Numbers do count when trying to persuade policymakers of the importance of your views.

3. Be on time, be prepared, and bring materials: Your time will be limited. Prepare talking points in advance and bring printed materials to leave behind as a resource.
4. Invite your representatives to visit your school: Suggest a tour of a new facility or invite them to speak at a district meeting. Members of Congress will welcome the opportunity for an up-close look at how a school operates.
5. Use the meeting as a photo opportunity: Take a photo with your representative at the school or community meeting. Use it in a newsletter or post it to a social media site.
6. Make contact with local Congressional staff: Get to know key staff in local offices. They can be extremely helpful in your efforts to gain access to lawmakers when they're in DC.
7. Be a local resource: Members of Congress frequently establish advisory panels (consisting of parents, teachers, administrators etc.) to provide them with the local viewpoint on education policy initiatives. By serving on these panels you will be in a good position to offer input.
8. Attend Town Hall meetings: Lawmakers hold town halls to facilitate open dialogue with their constituents. Plan to attend and pose a question about Impact Aid to your elected official.

## Communicating With Congress

### NAFIS Action Network

The NAFIS Action Network, our grassroots advocacy platform, is located on the NAFIS [website](#) under the "Contact Congress" tab or [directly](#). This virtual tool helps you send a letter to your members of Congress and provides information to help facilitate communication between you and your representative in Congress, including:

- Letter template to send a personal message to your senators and representative.
- Bills and related legislation NAFIS is tracking
- Access to Action Alerts and template letters
- Information about your Senators and representative including committee assignments, staff information, Twitter handle and more!

### Social Media

Using social media is a great way to amplify a message or get instant feedback. Nearly every Member of Congress has a social media presence, and online platforms can be an effective way to engage policymakers, the media and the public. Currently, NAFIS uses two social media platforms - Twitter and Facebook - to share information, amplify local stories, and build the NAFIS brand. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)!

[Twitter](#): Twitter is the land of instant communication. "Tweets" are capped at 140 characters, and hashtags are used to get across an idea in a few characters. A hashtag, the pound sign (#) is used to tag common conversations and make it easier to search for a topic. For example, if you type #ImpactAid into the Twitter search function, Tweets relevant to Impact Aid will appear.

Twitter is a great way to connect with Congress because it allows constituents to directly converse with members. For example, you can Tweet to your representative and he/she can respond instantly with a comment or answer to a question you pose. Just be sure to include their Twitter handle, that identifies each Twitter account using the at sign (@). For example, if you want to Tweet to NAFIS you'd include @NAFISschools in the Twitter message. You can usually find a Member of Congress' Twitter handle on his or her web-site.

Here are a few sample messages you or your school district can use during August recess (@XXX is a placeholder for you to enter your Member of Congress twitter handle):

- Federally impacted schools deserve full funding #ImpactAid @NAFISschools @XXX
- #Congress must pass a year-long bill, not a CR that delays #ImpactAid payments @XXX
- 1,200 school districts need their #ImpactAid funded fully and on time! @XXX
- #ImpactAid offsets the loss of local revenue *caused* by the Fed Govt. Fully fund #ImpactAid today!
- Thank you @XXX for supporting an increase for #ImpactAid!
- Every #ImpactAid dollar helps student success! @NAFISschools
- #Congress: Support a \$25 million increase for #ImpactAid @XXX

[Facebook](#): Facebook is one of the world's biggest social network, where subscribers can connect with friends, share articles, and amplify a message through "sharing" and "liking" features. For example, you can use Facebook to share articles and facts about Impact Aid. Alternatively, you can "like" posts from the [NAFIS Facebook page](#) or "share" them, which will re-post the message for your Facebook friends. Here are some sample posts for you to use on your personal or school district accounts. If a local news article is posted about Impact Aid in your school district, post it. Share with your friends and followers how Impact Aid helps children in your area!

- Without Impact Aid, our school district wouldn't be able to fund... (include a picture of what Impact Aid funds in your district)
- Impact Aid helps 832,419 students throughout 1,225 school districts annually! Urge your representatives to support Impact Aid.
- Today's students are tomorrow's leaders. Congress should fully fund Impact Aid to ensure my school district can provide XXX

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