2012 Engineering Deans Council
Public Policy Colloquium

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Overview

• The current political and economic climate
• A snapshot of the 112th Congress
• Key messages for Capitol Hill visits
The Typical Legislative Process
The Legislative Process in a Presidential Election Year!

- Election year means deep partisan divide
- 41 GOP senators; loss of Democratic filibuster-proof majority; margins in both House and Senate will tighten further after election
- Strong divisions on health care, climate change, and spending
- R&D, STEM education, and competitiveness still draw bipartisan support, however…
- Emphasis on economic recovery, job-creation
- Administration emphasizing transparency, accountability, and "good government"
Party Polarization: 1879 - 2010

Economic Climate and its Impact upon Congressional Expectations

“What it comes down to is Congress wants to know how many jobs will create”

By Cartoonist Sidney Harris
American Scientist
Why Your Hill Meetings Are So Important

• Less than 5 percent have backgrounds in science and engineering.
• According to CRS, there is only one physicist, one chemist, and one microbiologist among the 535 members of 112th Congress. All of these individuals reside in the House.
• Only 18 members of the 112th Congress have PhDs, while 27 members have no educational degree beyond a high school diploma.
• 6 have engineering degrees and 24 have medical degrees.
• 222 members of Congress have law degrees.
Key Messages for Hill Visits

• Stable and sustained funding for key federal science and engineering agencies is critical (e.g. NSF, DOD, DOE, NASA, NIH, NIST, etc.)
• Research and education are inextricably linked
• Role of science and engineering in job creation
• Importance of STEM education
• Need to support the entire innovation ecosystem
• Hot topics: energy and manufacturing
• What to say about Sequestration?
• CAUTION: America COMPETES Act is not necessarily an effective selling point with House Republicans