The Stennis Congressional Staff Fellows Program is a practical, bipartisan leadership development experience for senior-level staff of the United States Congress. The program focuses on future challenges to Congress as an institution of American democracy and the leadership role played by senior Congressional staff in meeting those challenges. In each Congress, 28 to 32 Stennis Fellows are selected by an independent panel. Each group is balanced by party and chamber. Stennis Fellows meet six to eight times over a 15-18 month period, with times and locations selected to be convenient to the Fellows.

One of the unique features of the Stennis Fellows Program is that Fellows determine their own learning agenda within a core theme.

Nationally and internationally renowned experts will meet with the Stennis Fellows to explore various aspects of the agenda. While insights from guest experts are valuable, even more significant is the dialogue, learning and relationship building that takes place among the Stennis Fellows.

At the conclusion of the Fellowship period, Fellows summarize their learning experience and, with the assistance of Stennis Center staff, prepare a summary of the Fellowship experience for the Congressional leadership and others interested in the future of the United States Congress.

The Stennis Fellows Program is not an advocacy effort; ideas developed through the Fellowship are presented as a resource for Stennis Fellows, Members of Congress, students of Congress, and others who share an interest in the work.

Facing a future of growing economic and social tensions at home and turmoil abroad, Congress must meet the challenges of governing in a context unimagined by the Founders. Those elected to Congress in the coming decades, and staff that serve them, will be called upon to lead through daunting and unpredictable obstacles.

The 114th Congress Stennis Fellows will explore how Congress can best fulfill its Constitutional role under the broad theme of Reaching Agreement: Making Congress Work for American Democracy.

Fellows will develop key questions to pursue with other and with leading scholars and experts in roundtable discussions. Examples of possible questions to help shape the learning agenda include:

- How can Congress work through partisan divisions to achieve legislative solutions? For example, can a stronger role for non-partisan technical expertise (as suggested by some scholars) be developed? Is it possible to create more space for relationship building and dialogue between Members that might increase the ability to legislate?

- Does Congress merely reflect polarization in society or does it create polarization? What are the trends and likely trajectory?

- Can Congress lead citizens to find common ground and reach consensus, and in the process build public trust?
Eligibility

Stennis Fellows must be nominated by a Member of Congress and be senior-level Congressional staff such as committee staff directors, chiefs of staff, legislative directors, counsels, and senior professional staff. Nominees should demonstrate:

- A track record of leadership in key staff positions (personal or committee) characterized by senior management responsibility and involvement in significant aspects of the legislative process;
- A reputation for statesmanship – caring for the evolution of Congress and the political system as a whole;
- Significant career commitment to public service, with special emphasis on Congress;
- A desire to make a significant contribution to further the mission of the program; and
- A commitment to learn and fully participate in the responsibilities of the fellowship.

Nominations of high-potential staffers with limited Hill experience also will be considered. Re-nominations of senior-level staff not selected in prior Congresses are encouraged. The ability to devote the time necessary to participate fully in the program is a prerequisite to being selected and retaining the designation of Stennis Fellow.

The Stennis Center seeks diversity in the Fellows Program and does not discriminate among individual nominees on the basis of race, religion, sex, national or ethnic origin, disability, or veteran status.

Projected Calendar Highlights

March 16, 2015 ........................................................................................................................................... Nominations due

April 2015 .................................................................................................................................................. Selection Committee finalizes selections

May 2015 .................................................................................................................................................... Invitations issued to 114th Congress Stennis Fellows

June 2015 ................................................................................................................................................... Welcoming Reception

July 2015 ..................................................................................................................................................... Inaugural Meeting – Set Learning Agenda

October 2015 ............................................................................................................................................... Overnight retreat to finalize Learning Agenda; workshop on dialogue process to be used throughout fellowship

November 2015 to April 2016 .................................................................................................................. Roundtable sessions (approximately four) with leading experts on major questions of Learning Agenda (several half-day sessions or combined sessions requiring an overnight stay)

May 2016 ................................................................................................................................................... Overnight retreat to synthesize conclusions from the Fellowship

September 2016 ......................................................................................................................................... Awards and Celebration Dinner
Stennis Center for Public Service Leadership

The John C. Stennis Center for Public Service Leadership was established in 1988 under the legislative branch to promote and strengthen public service leadership within the Congress and the Nation. The Stennis Center accomplishes its mission through leadership development programs, conferences, seminars, and special projects. The Stennis Center is headquartered in Starkville, Mississippi, with an office in Washington, DC.

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Tom Sliter
Senior Fellow and Program Coordinator

Stennis Fellows Program Mission

- Enhance the capacity and commitment of exceptional senior-level staff members to “Look Ahead” to what will be needed to better serve Congress and its Members in a world of rapid change;
- Foster dialogue and the exchange of ideas among senior-level staff members in a neutral venue, and create a valuable network of bipartisan, bicameral working relationships;
- Produce a useful result – an ongoing legacy of learning – for those who care about the long-term effectiveness of Congress as a governing institution; and
- Recognize and honor senior-level staff of the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in public service.

Stennis Congressional Staff Fellows 103rd through 113th Congress

113th Congress
Chris Adamo
Taunja Berquam
Bob Bonner
Patrick Carroll
Jonathan DeWitte
Austin Durrer
Bobby Frederick
Adrienne Hallett
Terry J. Halstead
Anne Hazlett
Kim Hildred
Kelly Hitchcock
Wally Hsueh
Tim Hysom
Kate Kaufer
Jonathan Kraden
Maria Meier
Brian Potts
Armstrong Robinson
Tara Shaw
Barvetta Singletary
Jen Stewart
Adam Telle
Jamila Thompson
Helen Tolar
Jennifer Van der Heide
Charles Harman
Jerry Hartz
Ryan Hedgepeth
Kyle Hicks
Caroline Holland
Erika Jeffers
Jenelle Krishnamoorthy
Stacy McBride
George McElwee
Scott E. Miller
Scott Miller
Jedd Moskowitz
Bill Murat
Tyler Owens
James Reid
Rachel Schroeder
Mike Seyfert
Colleen Shogan
Kevin Simpson
Rachael Taylor
William Tighe
Steven Wall
Monique Clendinen Watson

112th Congress
Ellen Balis
Brian Branton
Chris Campbell
Stuart Chapman
Michaelene Crowell
Matt Dinkel
Dana Gartzke

111th Congress
Sanders Adu
Robert A. Cochran
Pamela Day
Ken Flanz
Jennifer Goedke
Paul Grove
Kate Hallahan
T.A. Hawks
Edward Hild

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