



WASHINGTON WEEK

Welcome Packet

WASHINGTON WEEK



We are thrilled to welcome you to the heart of our nation's capital for the much-anticipated Washington Week 2024, organized by Student Veterans of America (SVA). Your commitment to join us, alongside influential chapter leaders from across the nation and dedicated staff from your National Headquarters, marks a significant step forward in our collective mission. We are honored to have you with us as we deliver testimony and answer questions before the U.S. Senate and U.S. House Committees on Veterans' Affairs during a joint hearing at the U.S. Capitol.

The joint hearing will take place on the morning of March 6th where SVA is poised to voice the pressing policy priorities that resonate with student veterans, students on active duty or currently serving in the reserves or National Guard, as well as students who are family members, caregivers, and survivors. These priorities, shaped by your invaluable insights and experiences, will be presented as a testament to our shared vision for transformative change to policies impacting higher education and veteran affairs.

Washington Week is all about empowering our member voices, therefore your SVA National Headquarters team has curated a series of events in addition to the joint hearing and your self-scheduled meetings on Capitol Hill. Interactions with your Members of Congress and their staff are crucial in fostering understanding of your journey in higher education and driving legislative progress.

- **Tuesday, March 5th** - Veterans in Higher Education Symposium at the American Legion's Washington, DC office
- **Wednesday, March 6th** - Joint hearing in the morning, followed by a lunch at We the Pizza where you'll engage in meaningful conversations about the hearing, and then an evening with our fellow advocates from AMVETS at the Phoenix Park Hotel
- **Thursday, March 7th** - SVA will honor some of last year's biggest champions for those in our community at reception at the Boeing Company headquarters

In addition to the above opportunities, we encourage you to stop by and visit your SVA National Headquarters office any time throughout the week. To ensure you have an enriching experience in Washington, DC, we included a comprehensive event packet with this letter. This resource is designed to guide you through Washington Week, featuring a detailed itinerary, insights on the joint hearing, a practical guide for engaging with your Members of Congress, and a curated visitor guide to the city's highlights.

Let us unite in our shared purpose and passion as we converge in Washington, DC. Together, we will advocate for the advancements our community rightfully deserves. We look forward to your presence and contributions during this pivotal week.

Safe travels and we'll see you soon in our nation's capital.

Regards,

Jared S. Lyon
National President & CEO
Student Veterans of America

EVENT SCHEDULE

TUESDAY, MARCH 5TH

INFORM THE HILL: CHAPTER MEETINGS WITH HILL STAFF

March 5, 2024 10:00 AM-4:00 PM EST

Elected officials need to hear about the student veteran experience, and Inform the Hill provides chapter members with that opportunity. SVA encourages chapter members to meet with their Members of Congress while in Washington, DC, and we will guide you in scheduling meetings.

VETERANS IN HIGHER EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM

March 5, 2024 4:30 PM-6:00 PM EST

Join SVA to kick off Washington Week as we host the Veterans in Higher Education Symposium at The American Legion's Washington Office. The sessions will discuss the emerging policy needs and trends facing student veterans and post-traditional students. The American Legion's Washington Office is located at 1608 K St. N.W. Washington, DC 20006.



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6TH

SVA TESTIMONY: JOINT HEARING OF SVAC/HVAC

March 6, 2024 10:00 AM-12:30 PM EST

Chapter members are invited to attend SVA's testimony on Capitol Hill. National President and CEO, Jared Lyon, will present SVA's policy priorities to a joint session of the Senate and House Committees on Veterans' Affairs. SVA is invited annually to deliver testimony at this joint hearing, and it is our primary opportunity to highlight key issues that student veterans and military-affiliated students bring to our attention throughout the year. SVA will be the second panel of the hearing. Please arrive by 11:00 AM to secure seating.

LUNCH AND CHAPTER NETWORKING ON THE HILL

March 6, 2024 12:45 PM-2:00 PM EST

After the joint session, chapter members will have a unique opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations about the hearing and SVA's policy priorities. "We the Pizza" 305 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20003

AN EVENING WITH AMVETS

March 6, 2024 5:00 PM-7:00 PM

SVA will host a legislative reception with AMVETS at the Phoenix Hotel, where chapter members can discuss policy issues and network with their peers. The evening will allow chapter members to interact directly with SVA's Government Affairs team members and other SVA Headquarters staff, and our friends at AMVETS. Phoenix Park Hotel is located at 520 North Capitol St NE, Washington, DC 20001

EVENT SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, MARCH 7TH

HEADQUARTERS OPEN HOUSE

March 7, 2024 8:00 AM-10:00 AM EST

Come by your SVA Headquarters building in downtown Washington, DC! SVA will host an open house, allowing chapter members to tour the office and meet SVA staff.

INFORM THE HILL: CHAPTER MEETINGS WITH HILL STAFF

March 7, 2024 10:00 AM-4:00 PM EST

Elected officials need to hear about the student veteran experience, and Inform the Hill provides chapter members with that opportunity. SVA encourages chapter members to meet with their Members of Congress while in Washington, DC, and we will guide you in scheduling meetings. chapter members to tour the office and meet SVA staff.

WASHINGTON WEEK RECEPTION

March 7, 2024 6:00 PM-7:30 PM EST

An opportunity for chapter members to tour the White House. These self-guided tours will be SVA will host a reception offering attendees the unique opportunity to engage with major players in student veteran advocacy. We will also honor some of the year's most prominent champions in the space The Boeing Company 929 Long Bridge Dr Arlington, VA 22202.



HOW-TO: MEET YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Why meet with your elected representatives?

Because it is the single most effective way to share your story.

According to the Congressional Management Foundation's Perceptions of Citizen Advocacy on Capitol Hill report, the most important method for influencing a Member of Congress on an issue was "In-person Issue Visits from Constituents." Beyond that, the top two methods Congressional offices utilize to better understand constituent issues are "In-district events" and "Personalized messages from constituents." Regardless of what you may have heard, Members care about what their constituents think and experience. Bringing your viewpoint directly to your Member's office is the best way to engage them on the issue and motivate them to take up your mantle.

How to schedule a meeting:

1. Figure out who your elected officials are (House of Representatives, Senate).

2. Call their office using the phone number on their official website.

You'll likely be answered by an intern or Staff Assistant, so introduce yourself, state that you're a constituent, and ask to schedule a meeting with the Member or relevant staffer.

You'll usually be given the Scheduler or Staffer's name and email address instead.

3. Email the Scheduler/Staffer with your meeting request.

Be concise and include your name, that you're a constituent, a brief overview of what you plan to discuss, your desired meeting dates and times (be flexible!), and how many attendees you'd like to bring.

4. If you don't hear back in a few days, reach back out with a gentle reminder/check-in.

Before the meeting:

Research your Member.

Look at their biography, committee/caucus membership, social media accounts, press releases, issue lists, sponsored/cosponsored legislation (Congress.gov), etc.

Be able to share your story.

Be as well-versed with what you'd like to share as possible, with knowledge of your talking points as well as responses to potential questions.

Tie your issue to the school/district/state as much as you can.

Prepare your ask.

What is it you want the Member to do? It can be anything, but make it reasonable.

(Optional) Have a leave-behind.

This is a one-pager that summarizes your most important points, materials from your school or SVA's Annual Policy Priorities.

We encourage student veterans attending the hearing to work with your school's Government Affairs department to schedule meetings with your Members of Congress after the hearing between 1:00 PM and 4:30 PM and the following day between 11 AM and 5:30 PM. This is a great way to connect with your elected officials and to make sure your voice is heard by those who represent you.

How to Conduct the Meeting

Go to the front desk, introduce yourself, and explain that you have a meeting with (Staffer/Member).

Once the meeting begins, exchange business cards and introduce yourself.

Thank them for their time, and anything the Member has done recently that you support.

State your ask and share your issue/message.

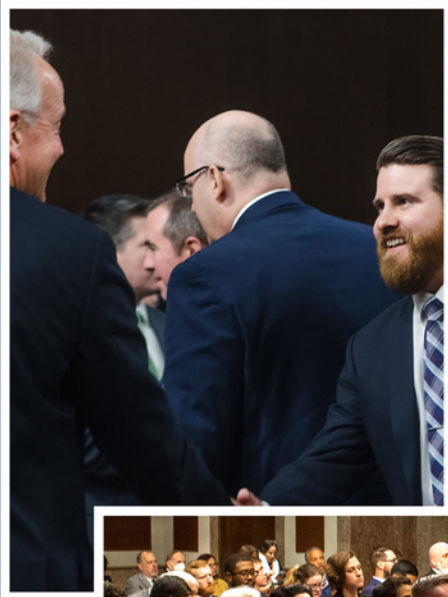
Answer any questions or tell them you will follow up with the requested information.

Share your leave-behind and thank them again for their time.

JOINT SESSION OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEES ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2024
TIME: 10:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room GD-50 | 50 Constitution Ave NE, Washington, DC 20002



The joint session of the Senate and House Committees on Veterans' Affairs is an annual opportunity for veteran serving organizations to present their policy priorities for the coming year. SVA's National President & CEO, Jared Lyon, will present testimony laying out the SVA's policy priorities for 2024.

To better understand what to expect at the hearing, you can view last year's hearing [here](#).

SVA's full written testimony from that hearing can be found [here](#).

Please arrive by 11:00 AM to secure a spot, as there will be high demand and limited seating.

(SVA will be the second panel of the hearing.)



SVA staff will be staged outside and inside the visitor entrance to the Dirksen Senate building at the corner of First St. NE and C St. NE

WASHINGTON, DC VISITOR GUIDE

NOTABLE ATTRACTIONS

Entire books have been written on the many visitor attractions in Washington, DC. This is not one of those books. Instead, this is a short, curated list of notable attractions that will start you on your way to exploring the District's amazing culture and history.

CAPITOL HILL

Capitol Hill gives visitors the opportunity to visit each branch of the federal government. If you are interested in visiting the White House, contact the office of your Member of Congress to set up a tour. The U.S. Capitol also offers tours, which let visitors see the Crypt, Rotunda, and National Sanctuary Hall. The Supreme Court is open to the public, and depending on the time of your visit, you may even be able to observe an oral argument. If you are interested in art, architecture, and history, you will want to stop by the Library of Congress. These attractions are all free and open to the public, though hours of operation differ. Please see the links below for more information on visiting each of these sites.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
SUPREME COURT
THE WHITE HOUSE
U.S. CAPITOL



NATIONAL MALL

The following is a non-exhaustive list of some of the most well-known attractions located on the National Mall. National Mall memorials, monuments, and museums are usually free and open 24 hours. The exception on the list below being the Washington Monument, which requires purchase of a ticket if you plan to enter the Monument. Please visit the National Park Service's web page for more information on the National Mall and Memorial Parks listed below. More information on the Smithsonian Institution's museums, galleries, and zoo can be found here.

KOREAN WAR VETERANS MEMORIAL LINCOLN MEMORIAL
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. MEMORIAL NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL
WASHINGTON MONUMENT WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL

ACCOMMODATIONS

There are many amazing options for accommodations in and around Washington, DC, but please keep in mind that all Washington Week events will take place in the heart of the District. Securing accommodations closer to downtown and Capitol Hill will make travel faster and less complicated. If you do plan to stay farther away from the action, please familiarize yourself with the many transportation options available in the District.

TRANSPORTATION

There are plenty of ways to get around Washington, DC. You can walk, run, bike, scoot, drive, or ride almost anywhere in the District. The most common ways to get around are listed below along with some information about how to make them work best for you.

METRORAIL AND METROBUS



The **rail** and **bus** services operated by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) offer convenient and easy access to most areas of Washington, DC. Prospective riders can purchase a **SmartTrip Card** online, at kiosks found at Metro Stations, or at other locations throughout the District. Consult the online rail and bus **maps** for additional information. Local Tip: When riding escalators in and out of Metro Stations, remember, or be prepared to be reminded, to stand to the right so others can walk to your left.

TAXIS, RIDESHARE, RENTAL CARS, AND PARKING



Taxis are available throughout the District. They all accept cash and credit. Alternatively, you can use the rideshare service of your choice. Both Lyft and Uber operate throughout Washington, DC. Parking is available but can be expensive and difficult to find. When searching for parking, it is recommended that you use a parking app to gain access to reservations, prices, and hours.

DC CIRCULATOR



The **DC Circulator** is a free bus service that runs 10 different routes through many of the District's most famous neighborhoods including Adams Morgan, Dupont Circle, and Georgetown. The National Mall route provides riders with easy access to some of the most well-known monuments and museums in the District. The Circulator runs every 10 minutes, but the days and times for each route differ so be sure to **check** ahead of time.

WALKING AND WHEELING AROUND DC



Walking and riding bikes or scooters are some of the most affordable and environmentally friendly options for getting around the District. Sidewalks are prevalent throughout the District, and walking can be one of the best ways to see certain areas, like the National Mall. For those who prefer seeing the sights on wheels, several companies offer bike and scooter rentals. **Capital Bikeshare** is one of the biggest bike rental services, with a fleet of more than 5,000 bikes at over 600 stations in the Washington, DC metro area. They offer single trip and 24-hour pass options. Scooters are also a popular mode of transportation. Services are provided by companies like **Bird** and **Lime**. Remember to follow all local laws and be safe!

There is so much to do in Washington, DC and so many ways to do it. We encourage you to connect with your SVA staff for additional ideas about local opportunities or visit your favorite travel website for additional information on sites to see and things to do.

Questions?

Check out our Washington Week **Webpage** and the **recording** of our virtual info session for answers to questions, like how to set up meetings with your elected officials, what to wear, and what not to bring to federal buildings.

If you have questions please reach out to SVA's Government Affairs team at government.affairs@studentveterans.org.



Through a network of nearly 1,600 on-campus chapters, Student Veterans of America® ensures that student veterans and military-connected students achieve their greatest potential.

Student Veterans of America

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