

# Congressional Fellowship

## Congressional engagement and leadership on foreign affairs and defense

The Stimson Center relaunched its Congressional Fellowship in 2019. The project provides deep subject matter expertise to Members of Congress and their staff, while offering Fellows – mid-career national security experts – exposure to the legislative process and key Congressional stakeholders.

### REPRIORITIZING CONGRESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

At a time of global uncertainty, stress, and change, Congressional engagement and leadership on foreign affairs and defense issues is urgently needed. The U.S. Congress, however, does not have the robust resources it requires to fully exercise its constitutional powers in foreign and defense policy. Over the past several decades, Congress has lost key venues for regular, informal, timely, and thoughtful bipartisan discussion of important U.S. foreign policy and defense issues. The institution has also faced staff cuts, declining median staff pay, and high staff turnover. Coupled with intense partisanship and the reactive character of the institution, it is no surprise that Congress struggles with long-term thinking and strategic action on national security issues. New, multi-dimensional threats, like climate change and information warfare, further complicate the policymaking environment.

### GROWING NETWORKS AND DEEPENING EXPERTISE

To address these structural challenges, and with an eye toward the increasingly complex international environment Congress will confront in the coming years, the Stimson Congressional Fellowship Program offers two fellows to Congress each year. One is placed in a House committee or personal office while the other is focused on working with a Senate committee or personal office. As a key duty of their fellowship, the fellows organize a continual series of non-partisan, not-for attribution seminars and briefings on a diverse range of international security issues, to promote continuous, strategic-level consideration of national security challenges and enhance defense and foreign policy decision-making. The fellows select the topics to be addressed independently or in concert with Members. Experts and

#### TEAM

##### Carolyn Haggis

Fellow, House



[Full bio →](#)

##### Clint Work

Fellow, Senate



[Full bio →](#)

researchers are invited from the military, U.S. government, academia, and other institutions. These informal meetings are open to Members and staff, so others can benefit from discussing both immediate and longer-term national security issues. At a time when many foreign policy discussions on Capitol Hill are by-invitation only and geared towards senior staff, or segregated along party lines, these inclusive sessions will bring staff together in a much-needed way.

While many organizations, including the U.S. Department of State, the American Political Science Association, and other think tanks, run Congressional fellowship programs and place national security experts on Capitol Hill for mid-career professional development purposes, Stimson is unique in encouraging its fellows, with the support of Members, to run non-partisan, not-for attribution seminars and briefings on a regular basis. Stimson's program gives fellows an opportunity to enhance their facilitation skills and gain experience building trans-partisan policy solutions in a legislative context. In providing a space for timely, thoughtful, and sustained bipartisan discussion of key U.S. foreign policy and defense issues, these sessions also create a forum where coalitions and networks can be forged. In this way, Stimson's Congressional Fellowship not only offers professional development for the fellows but achieves broad impact on Capitol Hill.

## Contact

For more information about program activities, contact Victoria Holt at [vholt@stimson.org](mailto:vholt@stimson.org). To discuss supporting the program, contact Sarah Savoy at [ssavoy@stimson.org](mailto:ssavoy@stimson.org).

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