The Congressional Process

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The Congressional Customer

- Members of Congress
  - US House of Representatives
    - 435 Members
    - Two-year terms
  - US Senate
    - 100 Members
    - Six-year terms
- Congressional Staff
  - Professional Staff Members
    - Work on one committee
    - Subject matter experts
    - Often have military background
    - Support Chairman (majority) or Ranking Member (minority)
  - Personal Staff
    - Work for one Member
    - Handle a multitude of issues
Formation of the Defense Bill

**AUTHORIZATION**

Description of congressional intent, authority to proceed on a program, restrictions on use of funds, statements of policy, etc.

**APPROPRIATIONS**

Provides amount of funding to expend on a program.
Congressional Timeline

BEGINNING OF FISCAL YEAR

CONGRESS CONvenes

PRESIDENT SUBMITS BUDGET

BUDGET PROCESS

SECDEF, CJCS, Customer Testimony

HBC

SBC

AUTHORIZATION BILL

APPROPRIATIONS BILL

CONGRESS CONvenes

PRESIDENT SUBMITS BUDGET

CONFERENCE

Floor Vote

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Keys to Congressional Support

- Program Performance
  - Staff constantly monitor cost, issue and performance from various sources (customer, competitors, press, etc.)
- Service Support
  - Congress looks for support from customer; if they don’t see it, they’re inclined to cut funding
  - Congress unlikely to support congressional plus-up if customer does not support
  - Presence on an Unfunded Requirements List is best indicator of strong customer support
- Strong Communication
  - Congressional customer hates to be surprised
  - Information (good and bad) travels to Congress very quickly – it’s in our best interest to provide information proactively and regularly
- Broad Base of Support
  - The more Members asking to support a program or add to it, the greater the chance of success