What is a Caucus?

- A congressional member organization of senators, representatives, or both, organized along a single theme or a set of issues.

- Caucuses can be narrowly focused, or broadly defined, but generally exist to bring together members who share an interest or interests and who wish to raise awareness of the relevant issues among their colleagues.

- Example 1 -- Specific: The Interstate 69 Mid-Continent Highway Caucus "...interested in promoting the development and completion of Interstate 69, a true north-south highway linking Port Huron, Michigan to Texas' border with Mexico." (Co-chairs Tom Delay, R-TX, John Hostettler, R-IN)

- Example 2 -- Broad: Science and Technology Caucus "...an informal group of Senators who are interested in focusing attention on science and technology research and development issues in the 106th Congress." (Chairman Bill Frist, R-TN)
Why support a caucus?

- Share the same interests—e.g. Science and Technology Caucus, Congressional Biotechnology Caucus, House Oceans Caucus, Congressional Natural Hazards Caucus

- Provides a mechanism for formal and informal communication with congressional members and staff outside of the committee structure

- Offers smaller societies opportunity to leverage their visibility and message with larger organizations to a broad group of senators and representatives

- Can provide a mechanism to highlight federal programs/agencies important to your membership

- Can provide forum for advocating specific legislation
What are the key ingredients to a successful caucus?

- A chair or co-chairs that have the enthusiasm and interest in the theme and/or political capital to draw attention and support from their colleagues.

- Committed staff member(s) who can actually do the work and pull events and people together.

- An outside support organization or organizations that provide the information, speakers, financial support, connection to the federal agencies and a broader network beyond Congress.

- Example: Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus
  - 280 members in the House, 50 Senators
  - 43 states represented
  - Four legislative initiatives in the 106th Congress
  - Website with dozens of useful links
House Member Organizations

106th Congress Republican Sophomore Class
African Trade and Investment Caucus
Albanian Issues Caucus
Amy Caucus
Bicycle Caucus
Bipartisan School Health and Safety Caucus
Coalition (Blue Dogs), The
Congressional Advisory Panel to the National Campaign to Reduce Teen Pregnancy
Congressional Air Powers Caucus
Congressional Alcohol Fuels Caucus
Congressional Arts Caucus
Congressional Automotive Caucus
Congressional Aviation and Space Caucus
Congressional Banking Caucus
Congressional Biomedical Research Caucus
Congressional Boating Caucus
Congressional Border Caucus
Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues
Congressional Caucus on Central Europe
Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues
Congressional Caucus on India
Congressional Caucus on Sri Lanka
Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues
Congressional Children's Caucus
Congressional Coalition on Population and Development
Congressional Coastal Caucus
Congressional Electricity Caucus
Congressional Family and Protection Caucus
Congressional Friends of Animals
Congressional Hunting Caucus
Congressional Human Rights Caucus
Congressional Jobs and Fair Trade Caucus
Congressional Mining Caucus
Congressional Missing and Exploited Children
Congressional Native American Caucus
Congressional Pro-Choice Caucus
Congressional Real Estate Caucus
Congressional Social Security Caucus
Congressional Steel Caucus
Congressional Task Force Against Anti-Semitism
Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease
Congressional Task Force to End the Arab Boycott
Congressional Task Force on Fatherhood Promotion
Congressional Task Force on International HIV/AIDS
Congressional Task Force on Tobacco and Health
Congressional Travel and Tourism Caucus
Congressional Ukrainian Caucus
Congressional Urban Caucus
Congressional Working Group on China
Conservative Action Team
Conservative Opportunity Society
Constitutional Caucus
Democratic Budget Group
Democratic Freshman Class
Democratic Task Force on Hunger
Depot Caucus
Diabetes Caucus
Educational Caucus (House)
Forestry 2000 Task Force
House Beef Caucus
House Cancer Awareness Working Group
House Commuter Caucus
House Intercity Passenger Rail Coalition
House Portuguese American Caucus
Sustainable Development Caucus
Tuesday Group
United Nations Working Group
Upper Mississippi River Task Force
Western Caucus

House Pro-Life Caucus
House Reading Caucus
House Renewable Energy/Energy Efficiency Caucus
House Republican Israel Caucus
House Trails Caucus
House Working Group on Mental Illness
Impact Aid Coalition
Information Technology Working Group
Insurance Caucus, The
Interstate 69 Mid-Continent Highway Caucus
Law Enforcement Caucus
Long Island Sound Caucus
Mainstream Conservative Alliance
Medical Technology Caucus
Minor League Baseball Caucus
Mississippi River Caucus
National Retail Sales Tax Caucus
New Democrat Coalition
North American Agriculture Caucus
North-Central-West Congressional Coalition
Congressional Task Force on Manufacturing
Great Lakes Task Force
Upper Mississippi River Task Force
Northern Border Caucus
Older Americans Caucus
Parkbuilders Coalition
Progressive Caucus
Public Pension Reform Caucus
Republican Freshman Class
Republican Housing Opportunity Caucus
Reserve Components Caucus, The
Rural Health Care Coalition
Senate Member Organizations

Bipartisan Senate Task Force on Fatherhood Promotion  
Centrist Coalition  
Friends of Portugal  
Northeast-Midwest Senate Coalition  
Great Lakes Task Force  
New England Caucus  
Senate Smart Growth Task Force  
Senate Task Force on Manufacturing  
Science and Technology Caucus  
Senate Auto Caucus  
Senate Beef Caucus  
Senate Children’s Caucus  
Senate Coastal Coalition

Senate Democratic Task Force on Social Security  
Senate Jewelry Task Force  
Senate National Guard Caucus  
Senate NATO Observer Group  
Senate Renewables and Energy Efficiency Caucus  
Senate Rural Health Caucus  
Senate Steel Caucus  
Senate Steering Committee  
Senate Textile Steering Committee  
Senate Tourism Caucus  
Senate Transit Caucus  
Western States Senate Coalition
Congessional Bicameral Organizations

Ad Hoc Congressional Committee for Irish Affairs
Ad Hoc Steering Committee on Telehealth
American Automotive Performance & Motorsports Caucus
California Democratic Congressional Delegation
California Republican Congressional Delegation
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
Congressional Asian Pacific Caucus
Congressional Biotechnology Caucus
Congressional Black Caucus
Congressional Caucus on Hong Kong
Congressional Coalition on Adoption
Congressional Coast Guard Caucus
Congressional Cmte. to Support Writers and Journalists
Congressional Competitiveness Caucus
Congressional Fire Services Caucus, The
Congressional Friends of Human Rights Monitors
Congressional Heart and Stroke Coalition
Congressional Hispanic Caucus
Congressional Manufactured Housing Caucus
Congressional Naval Mine Warfare Caucus
Congressional Oil and Gas Forum

Congressional Prevention Coalition
Congressional Property Rights Coalition
Congressional Soybean Caucus
Congressional Sportmen's Caucus
Congressional Task Force on Organ and Tissue Donation
Congressional Western Water Caucus
Education Caucus
Federal Government Service Caucus
Friends of Ireland
House/Senate International Education Study Group
Internet Caucus
Long Island Congressional Delegation
National Security Caucus
New York State Congressional Delegation
Pork Industry Congressional Caucus
Religious Prisoners Congressional Task Force
Renewable Alliance
Senate/House Steering Committee on Retirement Security
Tennessee Valley Authority Congressional Caucus
Vietnam Era Veterans in Congress
Creating a Congressional Natural Hazards Caucus

- Action item from PPP 2000 Forum 7
  - co-sponsored by AGI, AGU, and IRIS
- Goal: Develop wider understanding in Congress that mitigating natural hazards is a public value
- Hazards issues cut across committee jurisdictions
- Coordinate hazard-related events on Capitol Hill
- Need strong partnerships with outside groups
  - Science & engineering societies
  - American Red Cross
  - Insurance industry
  - Emergency managers
  - University consortia
  - Land-use planners
Natural Hazards Caucus Work Group

American Geological Institute
American Geophysical Union
American Iron and Steel Institute
American Meteorological Society
American Red Cross
American Society of Civil Engineers
Applied Technology Council
Association of American State Geologists
Association of Contingency Planners
Association of State Flood Plain Managers
Circum-Pacific Council
Consortium of Organizations for Strong Motion Observation Systems
Disaster Recovery Business Alliance
Earthquake Engineering Research Institute
Emergency Information Infrastructure Project
Geo-Institute of ASCE
Geological Society of America
Institute for Business & Home Safety
International Association of Emergency Managers
International Code Council
IRIS Consortium
Manufactured Housing Institute
Multihazard Mitigation Council of the National Institute of Building Sciences
National Emergency Management Association
Reinsurance Association of America
Seismological Society of America
State Farm
Structural Engineering Institute of ASCE
Telcordia
University Corporation for Atmospheric Research
USAA
Western Disaster Center
Western States Seismic Policy Council
Congressional Natural Hazards Caucus Timeline

- Idea broached June, 1998
- External support group (Natural Hazards Caucus Work Group) assembled spring/summer 1999
- Senate co-chairs recruited fall 1999
- Caucus launched June 21, 2000
Congressional Natural Hazards Caucus
Forum on Reducing America's Vulnerability to Disasters
June 21, 2000

The Honorable James Lee Witt, Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency
Ms. Sue Richter, Senior Vice President, American Red Cross
Mr. Eric Tolbert, North Carolina Director of Emergency Management
Mr. John Jones, Deputy Director, National Weather Service
Mr. Harvey Ryland, President, Institute for Business and Home Safety
Dr. William Hooke, Senior Policy Fellow, American Meteorological Society
### Congressional Natural Hazards Caucus

**Senator Stevens of Alaska and Senator Edwards of North Carolina, co-chairs**

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