

Working with Congress:  
Two Sides to Every Coin  
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# Why Work with Congress

- Competition for funding has never been more severe
- If you expect the public to support your research, you have an obligation to help them understand why
- If you expect someone else to carry your water, you will probably wind up being pretty thirsty

# NASA Budget to Increase

- Scientist: "Cool, more money for space and earth science research"
- Congress: "Cool, more fund raisers with aerospace lobbyists at Morton's Steakhouse."

# NSF Funds New Project to Detect Brown Dwarfs

- Scientist: “A good example of cutting edge astronomy research”
- Congress: “They are spending how much on pygmies?”

# NOAA to Reorganize Weather Research Labs

- Scientist: "Oh...this is how the Bush Administration plans to get back at those overly concerned about climate change?"
- Congress: "Great – this is our chance to move those labs to our district."

# Energy Dept To Buy World's Fastest Supercomputer

- Scientist: "All right – finally we will be able to do leading edge modeling for climate prediction and particle physics."
- Congress: "Is this that supercomputer Japan is trying to dump here to put U.S. companies out of business?"

# Navy to Spend \$100 Million for New Research Sub

- Scientist: “Yes – we need new subs so that we can get to those deep sea vents on the ocean floor.”
- Congress: “Great - how do I explain my vote for this back in Nebraska at the VFW Hall?”

# Take Home Message – How Do You Want To Be Remembered?

- “Nice guys, but we just talked for 60 minutes and I still don’t know what they want – or why.”
- “I get it. This is important to our constituents and the country. They explained it clearly. We need to be out front on this issue.”

# Getting Your Point Across

- Know your audience
- Try to relate on their terms
- Help them to help you
- Be brief, organized, factual, & direct
- Express appreciation for their efforts
- Know something about the budget and policy environment they have to confront