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<https://dkgusforum.org/>

US Forum Connection

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US Forum

Mission

The mission of the US Forum is to serve the interests and concerns of its members.

a. The emphasis is on sharing information and ideas and exploring solutions to identified issues.

b. Participating US Forum members can engage with the issues of concern of all members at the US Forum sessions during international conferences and the international convention.

(US Forum Guidelines, 2021)

Advocacy Statement

The US Forum is dedicated to being an advocate for women, children, and education by implementing actions which enable change and improvement in social institutions, systems, legislation, and practices that impose hardships or impact negatively on individuals, groups, or families.

NLS 2024

Planning to attend the National Legislative Seminar, 2024?

Make your hotel reservations **BEFORE February 6th** to receive the conference rate of \$129.00 per night!

Call 888-294-5059 and request the conference rate for DKG US Forum National Legislative Seminar!

Day by Day at NLS!

The committee reserves the right to adjust event times should this be needed due to unexpected circumstances.

SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 2024

2:00-5:00 pm Registration and Hospitality Room open for early arriving NLS participants

SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 2024

12:00-5:00 pm Registration

2:00-3:30 pm Opening session

Greeting, Flag Salute, Welcome from DKG Society International President

Women and Education in the Upcoming Legislative Landscape: Lisa Maatz, National Advocacy Consultant

3:30-4:00 pm Break for Hotel Check-In

4:00-5:15 pm Table Talks: Taking Advocacy to the Next Level

5:30 pm Dinner (Included in Registration)

6:30 pm The Role of AI Systems in Today's Classrooms: Rob Weil, Director of Field Programs, AFT

7:30 pm Meet and Greet by Region

MONDAY, MARCH 11, 2024

6:00-7:15 am Breakfast (Included in Registration)

7:15-11:15 am Option 1: Leave for Arlington Cemetery Wreath Laying Ceremony

Option 2: Navigating the Healthcare System: Bev Johns, DKG

Facts about African American Women Educators and

Famous Sites for Women's History in DC: Patricia Neal, DKG

12:00-1:00 pm Lunch (Included in Registration)

1:15-2:30 pm Improving Working Conditions of Teachers: Panel Presentation

2:45-3:45 pm Update on the Nation's Mental Health Service Systems:

Dr. Anita Everett, Director, Center for Mental Health Services Systems, SAMHSA

4:00-5:00 pm Key Actions of the US Dept. of Education to Strengthen Public Schools: Gwen Graham, Assistant Secretary for Legislation and Congressional Affairs, US Dept. of Education

6:15-7:00 pm Dinner (Included in the registration)

7:00-8:00 pm The Ins and Outs of Meeting on the Hill with Members of Congress: Blake Kelly, Adam Goldberg, NRTA/AARP

8:00-9:00 pm State Planning for Day on the Hill

TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2024

6:30-7:30 am Breakfast (Included in the registration)

8:00 am Depart for Capitol Hill

9:30-10:30 am Briefing on Current Legislative Initiatives related to Education

10:30-4:30 pm Visits to Offices of Your Elected Representatives

5:00 pm Depart Capitol Hill-Return to Hotel

5:30-7:00 pm Dinner (Included in Registration)

7:15-8:30 pm An Evening with the Arts: Tondra Odom, President DKG, DC, Marjorie Mitzner, Museum Educator

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2024

8:00-8:45 am Breakfast (Included in Registration)

8:45-9:45 am Social Security-The Program, Solvency, and WEP/GPO: Tom Nicholls, NRTA/AARP

9:45-11:00 am Experiences from Day on the Hill-Getting the Message Out

11:00-11:30 am Closing Remarks and Next Steps

Welcome to the US Forum National Legislative Seminar: Spotlight on Speakers

The US Forum is pleased to announce that the following speakers have recently been added to the program. These outstanding experts in their respective fields will inform, energize, and enhance our preparation for speaking with legislators during the Day on the Hill event.

- Gwen Graham, Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Congressional Affairs for the US Department of Education and former member of the US House of Representatives, will bring important updates regarding public education legislation and ways to advocate on behalf of the nation's public-school educators. In addition to serving as a member of Congress, she also held the position of Chief of Labor and Employee Relations for the Leon County School District in Florida, board member of the Florida Educational Negotiators Association, and PTA President and School Advisory Council Chair at her children's school. Gwen is the daughter of former Florida governor, Bob Graham, and is an honorary member of DKG.
- Brad Thomas, Deputy Director of Education and Human Services Policy for the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, will provide a briefing on current and proposed legislation in the US Congress House of Representatives. Brad formerly served as the Senior Education Policy Advisor for Representative Virginia Foxx and focused on disability policy matters. Brad will speak to us on Tuesday, March 12th during the Day on the Hill event in the Capitol.

Sights and Sounds of D.C.

In addition to participating in the US Forum National Legislative Seminar, (Sunday, March 10-Wednesday, March 13th), there are endless things to do in the Washington DC area before and after the seminar events. If you arrive in Washington before the official start of the seminar on March 10th, or plan to stay for a few days following the seminar, here are just some of the many exciting sites to consider adding to your itinerary!

Ford's Theater: fords.org

National Cathedral: <https://cathedral.org/visit-tour/>

Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts: <https://www.kennedy-center.org/whats-on/calendar/>

Holocaust Memorial Museum: <https://www.ushmm.org/information/visit-the-museum/plan-your-visit>

National Museum of African American History and Culture: <https://nmaahc.si.edu/>

National Museum of Women in the Arts: <https://nmwa.org/>

National Gallery of Art-Special Exhibit, Photographs of Dorothea Lange:

<https://www.nga.gov/exhibitions/2023/dorothea-lange-seeing-people.html>

For more information about events during the month of March 2024, visit the official Washington, DC Visitors' Bureau site, <https://washington.org/things-do-washington-dc>

To view the online, interactive version of the Official Visitors' Guide, go to:

<https://digital.milespartnership.com/publication/?m=45256&l=1>

Interested in scheduling your own guided tour? There is even a site to do this!

<https://dcdesignstours.com/all-tours/>

Your senators and congressmen can help get you tickets to visit certain sites such as the White House, and several others. Check their individual websites for more information.

These are some things you can only experience in the nation's capital, and March is a perfect time to do this! See you there!

Tips for a Successful Meeting with Your Legislators

In the December Connection, you will find a list of helpful reminders about PREPARING to meet your legislators during the NLS, 2024 Day on the Hill event. Some of these reminders were to (1) contact your legislator's staff member for a specific time for the meeting, (2) view the website(s) of the legislators you are meeting with to learn about the legislation they have recently sponsored and names of the committees they serve on, and (3) make a "follow-up" call to the office staff member one week before the scheduled meeting date (March 12) to confirm the arrangements.

Now that you have made appointments to meet your legislators or the staffers on March 12, it is time to prepare a plan for the meeting. Schedule at least 20 minutes or more for each meeting. Please see the section below "Tips for Speaking to Your Legislator" to help you plan.

Experienced advocates will share ways to ensure a successful meeting with your legislator during the National Legislative Seminar. You will feel confident and prepared to speak about your issue, not only in Washington DC, but in your home district as well!

These tips were compiled by Dr. Elizabeth Turner, educational consultant, legislative advocate, and past chair of The US Forum Steering Committee and National Legislative Seminar.

There are 3 parts to plan for a successful meeting: the Opening, the Middle, and the Closing.

Opening of the Meeting

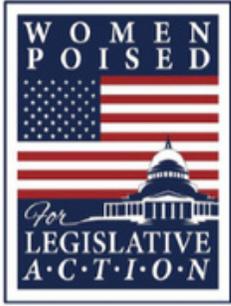
1. During the Opening, you should introduce yourself by stating your name, title, organization (The United States Forum of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International for Key Women Educators), followed by a brief description of the purpose of the Society and the Forum. One person should be designated as the group leader who speaks for the group. Others need only introduce themselves by name. Other group members may lead the discussion on another issue.
2. Business cards can be exchanged with the staff member or legislator. The group leader should provide a packet of information to the legislator that includes talking points, reference materials related to the issue(s) you plan to discuss, and brief information about the US Forum and Delta Kappa Gamma Society International.
3. Next, thank the legislator for a recent legislative action that had a positive result and for taking the time to meet. Be sure to identify yourself as constituents of this legislator.

Middle of the Meeting

4. During the Middle of the meeting, you should first state the purpose of the meeting. This could be to discuss a specific bill, or issue(s) that are relevant to educators in your state or district, or an issue of national importance to educators, women, or children.
5. For each issue, prepare a one-page document with the summarized information to use in your conversation. Present no more than 3-5 talking points for each issue with a supporting statement for each one. Stories, or personal experiences that illustrate the issues, are very effective during this section of the meeting.
6. Listen to the lawmaker's position on the issue(s) to determine the potential for the legislator to support or oppose this issue(s). This is not the time to argue with the legislator.
7. Summarize your talking points briefly and provide a specific "ask," what it is that you want the legislator to do for you. For example, ask the legislator, "Will you support HR Bill on education?"

Closing of the Meeting

8. During the Closing portion of the meeting, thank the legislator or staff member for their time.
9. Remind the legislator of the packet of information that you provided at the start of the meeting with your talking points and contact information.
10. Describe the way(s) you will share messages with other DKG members regarding the work this legislator is doing on behalf of education, women, and children.



**Registration for DKG US Forum NLS,
March 10-13, 2024**

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Address _____

City, State or Other _____

Registration Fee: please mark your choice below

March 10-13, 2024: \$340, (meals included) Date of attendance: _____

One day Commuter fee: \$170, (meals included)

**Holiday Inn National Hotel/Crystal City: \$129/night (group rate), King or 2 Queens; \$20 hotel parking/night
Call the hotel directly (888-294-5059) to make reservations and identify your group affiliation with DKG U.S.
Forum National Legislative Seminar to receive the group rate**

**There is a complimentary shuttle that runs every 30 minutes, from 4:30 am-11:00 pm, between the airport
and the hotel.**

DKG State and Chapter _____

State Officer _____ Chapter Officer _____

How many NLS Events have you attended before this one? _____

Special/Dietary Needs _____

Emergency Contact Name _____ Phone Number _____

Registration form must be received by February 23, 2024

Send the registration form with check made out to DKG US Forum to:

**Linda Perl, Registrar
5910 N. 52nd Place, Paradise Valley, AZ 85253**

Credit card registrants use this link: <https://dkgusforum.org/nls-wash-dc-registration>

Where Are All the Kids?

At the December meeting of the US Forum Legislative Subcommittee, the topic of the rising rates of chronic absenteeism during the 2022-2023 academic year was discussed. Though teacher retention and compensation are still major issues for educators, the decline in consistent student attendance in K-12 classrooms has been noted by school administrators and policy experts as a significant threat to the achievement of all students (Blad, 2023).

In addition to the rising rates of infrequent attendance across the US, an even greater concern that was discussed is the number of students who never returned to school following the pandemic. As reported by Health News, Florida, an analysis by The Associated Press, and Stanford University Education professor, Thomas Dee, the US has an estimated 240,000 students in 21 states whose absences have not been accounted for. These students did not move out of state, nor did they sign up for private school or home-school, according to publicly available data (2023, Health News, Florida). In California, 87,000 students are unaccounted for (D'Souza, 2023). Along with California, New York and Louisiana have the highest concentration of unaccounted students in the nation.

Data from the studies suggest several reasons for this high rate of unaccounted students across the nation (2023, Attendance Works; 2022, Office of Elementary and Secondary Schools). These include students who are undocumented and fear deportation, students who may be home schooled without providing notice to their school district, students whose families are experiencing homelessness, or have responsibilities of caring for family members or siblings, transportation barriers and lack of parental engagement.

At the current rate, there will be a half million students who will be chronically absent from school in 2031-2032. Proposed federal legislation such as HR 744, (Mental Health of Educators and Staff Act), addresses this crisis with funds for sensitivity training, on campus family resource centers, and additional resource officers and attendance officers.

Subcommittee members Francoise Bell and Sheila Gaiser shared that Hawaii and California have family resource centers and resource officers who work on ways to bring the community together, thereby increasing the likelihood of regular attendance in school. At the next meeting the Legislative Committee will focus on the role and importance of the school resource officer and attendance officer and will have a guest speaker on this topic.

Sources: www.chalkbeat.org, ed.gov, www.azed.gov, calmatters.org, edweek.org