

# Preparing for the Bernard and Audre Rapoport L'Taken Social Justice Seminar

## Congressional Delegation Research Guide

60 Minutes



In preparation for and during a L'Taken weekend, it is helpful for you and your students to have background information about the Members of Congress you will be visiting. The guidance on this page will help you to identify each participant's Senators and Representative and discover basic information about these elected officials. If you want your students to research their Members on their own, you can ask them to complete the grid on page 2.

### **Identifying Your Students' Senators and Representatives**

Navigate in your browser to <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/findyourreps.xpd>

1. In the "Address" bar, type the street address, city, and state of the first participant. Click "Go."
2. On the top of the page, under the address and above the map, the site will display the two Senators and the Representative associated with the address under a green heading "Who represents this district?"
3. In the "Congressional District" column of the Participant List form, enter the state and district number of the student's Representative, listed at the top of the page and under the Representative's name. Please follow this format: IL-5 (State Abbreviation—District number).

### **Researching Senators and Representatives**

After you identify a student's Senators and Representative using govtrack.us, click the name of a member to view their profile. Within this profile, you will find the following useful resources:

#### **1. Official Site**

Near the top of each GovTrack profile is a link to the Member's official website. Click the link and take a few minutes to browse through this site, focusing on the following categories:

- **Biography/About the Member:** Find general background information about the Member's career, family, upbringing, etc.
- **Issues and Policy:** Get a sense of the Member's stances on a wide range of issues. If you can anticipate a few issues that are important to your students, read these sections more carefully.
- **Legislative Agenda:** Learn about the Member's top priorities. Students can reference these priorities in an effort to connect their topic to what the Member thinks is important.

#### **2. Committee Membership**

A Member is most influential on the issues that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committees on which he or she sits. Print a list of each Member's Committees to help students choose which issues they will discuss and to whom their speech will be most effective.

#### **3. Bill Sponsorship**

Browse through the list of bills the member has sponsored to get an overview their priorities and the types of legislation he or she has recently supported.

#### **4. In the News**

For an idea of what has put a member in the spotlight recently, type the name into [news.google.com](http://news.google.com) or search specifically on [Politico.com](http://Politico.com) or [NYtimes.com](http://NYtimes.com)



## CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION RESEARCH GUIDE

1.) Navigate in your browser to <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/findyourreps.xpd>

2.) In the "Address" bar, type your street address, city, and state (e.g. 214 N Main St Glen Ellyn, IL). Click "Go."

3.) On the left-hand bar, the site will display your two Senators and Representative

	Use <a href="http://www.govtrack.us/findyourreps.xpd">govtrack.us/findyourreps.xpd</a>				Use the Member's official website			Use <a href="http://news.google.com">news.google.com</a>	
	Name	State/ District	What party does the Member belong to?	When was the Member first elected? When is he/she up for re-election?	Name one or two committees the Member sits on. Is the Member a Chairperson or Ranking Member of a committee? Which one?	What was the Member's job before taking office?	What are three key issues/top priorities for the Member?	List one issue where you agree with the Member's stance and one issue where you disagree.	Browse news articles that refer to the Member. Why has the Member been in the news?
Senator 1									
Senator 2									
Representative									

**Bring this form with you to the L'Taken Seminar!**