Happy New Year CAN Coordinators!

On January 3rd 2017, the 115th Congress was sworn in. At the start of the New Year, now is the perfect time to develop your relationship with your Congressional Delegation! As CAN Coordinators, it's important to present yourself as a resource to your members of Congress - one who represents the interests of their constituents.

To help you with this process, this CAN Do Newsletter for January 2017 provides you with resources to help navigate and understand the 115th Congress, including:

- Composition of the 115th Congress.
- CQ Roll Call’s 2016 Guide to the New Congress.
- How to contact and learn about your Congressional members.
- CEC Resources – Legislative Action Center and CEC Professional Policies and Positions.

The New Congress

With the new and diverse Congress sworn in, as of January 3rd, it's possible you have a new member of Congress! This session of Congress is already making history, being the most racially diverse Congress Washington has seen.

Check out some facts about the 115th Congress:

Composition of the House:
- Parties: Republican (241), Democrat (194), Independent (0)
- Minorities: Woman (83), Black (46), Hispanic (34), Asian (12)

Composition of the Senate:
- Parties: Republican (52), Democrat (46), Independent (2)
- Minorities: Woman (21), Black (3), Hispanic (4), Asian (3)

Notable statistics:
- A record number of women in the Senate (21).
- A record number of Hispanic members will serve in the House (34) and the Senate (4).
- A record number of Asian American members in the House (12) and the Senate (3).
- A record total number of Black members of Congress (49).

*These numbers are from thehill.com. Total numbers may change due to future reporting.

Whether you have new members or not, now is a great time to review the positions of your Representatives and Senators, so that you can plan your approach to advocacy for the coming session! Check out your Representatives’ and Senators’ websites and familiarize yourself with their platforms, their positions on education issues, and if they are incumbents, their previous voting record. A great resource to learn the basics of the new members is the CQ Roll Call 2016 Guide to the New Congress!

The next step is, to reach out to your members of Congress. If your members are returning from the 114th Congress, now is a great opportunity to reaffirm those connections. Reach out to your Representative and your Senators and remind them of previous conversations and the legislative goals of CEC!

If your Representative and/or Senators are new, the very beginning of their term is the perfect time to introduce yourself as a member of CEC, a professional in the field of special/gifted education and a constituent. To help assist you in this process we're providing some resources which you can use to give your new members of Congress perspective on special education policy.

Resources
CEC makes getting in touch with your members of Congress simple through the Legislative Action Center (LAC). As many of you have become familiar with, the LAC allows you to find your elected official in several ways: entering your zip code, the last name of your legislator, or simply by clicking your state on the interactive map provided.

Once you find your congressional representatives, click their name to receive information including: biography, contact information for their Washington Office and Home Office, committees they serve on, social media accounts, and bills they support. The contact information will provide you with the best way to be in touch with your representatives.

All CEC Professional Policies and Positions can be found on the CEC website. You can use this webpage as a resource for future education focused conversations you may have with your Representative and Senators.
After you have introduced yourself to your members of Congress– it is important to continue this relationship throughout all of 2017 and beyond! Look for the February 2017 CAN Do, where CEC will provide you with steps to maintain these relationships!

Questions? Contact Katie Grady: katieg@cec.sped.org or 703-264-9498