

IEEE Congressional Visit Days 2017
Trip Report
by
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Sri Raghavan and Scott Blackstone of IEEE NH Executive Committee represented IEEE NH and the State at the Congressional Visit Days in Washington on April 25-26. It is an annual event organized by IEEE USA to firsthand communicate Science, Technology and Policy needs and views of IEEE Members (who are also Voters from constituencies of) to Senate and House leaders in the Capitol.



Scott, who has attended these events several times in the past was also accompanied by his wife Chris, a Principal of a leading high

School in NH. She not only added perspectives from K-12 and STEM Perspectives but also happily served as our Photographer. Our sincere thanks to her.

The event was organized in two days. We spent the first day at IEEE Head quarters in D.C where we met the IEEE delegates from all the other states. Russ Harrison provided us an overview of CVD days, Objectives, do-and-donts, and logistics. These along with healthy discussions were enormously helpful in getting ready for our meetings the following day.

The second half o the first day was spent in the basement of the Capitol building where there were many seasoned presenters some of them IEEE Staff and others former and current Congressional Staff members. These provided contextual perspectives on congressional budgets and other topical issues that are critical to IEEE members, as gate keepers of Science, Technology, Innovation and Education.

We started the second day with a photo-op meeting with NH Senator Shaheen. She was extremely cordial and gracious and spent a generous amount of time with us. She has always been a great champion for. Having been a governor of New Hampshire for two successive terms she was deeply aware of and shared the importance of Science, Technology and Innovation for NH and reiterated her championship. It was not at all surprising that she was in resonance with IEEE perspectives and priorities we wanted to share with her (Key points summarized later).

Thereon through the day, we met with Staff of NH Senators Shaheen and Maggie Hassan, and NH Representatives Ann Kuster and Carol.

IEEE Staff Bernadette had a done marvelous job of scheduling that was well optimized to give us good time between the meetings and also cutting down the amount of walking we had to do for going from one office to another.

All the meetings were very cordial and productive.

Key Points We Shared with Staff of Our Senators and Representatives.

- Importance of Funding and Preserving NIST: especially for Cyber Security; Healthcare and IOT;
- Simplification of Small Business Innovation Grants (SBIR) So small companies can avail of them. At present submitting proposals are extremely burdensome and beyond the reach of most small companies. Often times, even when awarded it is hard to navigate and claim the money
- Infrastructure Renewal Plans: This has to go beyond rebuilding roads and bridges. It has to extend to Upgrading National Research and Allied Labs. Funding additional ones for NH which has only a few.
- Importance of Basic Research and Funding for NH – these are crucial for creation of startups and jobs in NH (as NH economy is mostly technical). NH can also attract significant talent which end up working in neighboring Massachusetts.
- We also thanked our representatives for securing NSF grants last year for Rivier and Dartmouth University. Hoped that this would continue and expand in the coming years.
- Importance of Immigration Policy favoring Green Cards and end use of temporary foreign labor costing jobs of citizens. Since this is a highly touchy topic – we always brought this up

at the end of the meeting.

- Inviting them for meeting with IEEE Members and Executive Committee when they are in NH. (We have follow on action item on this, organizing a major IEEE event which will make it worthwhile for them as well as for us).

Overall all the meetings were cordial and productive, Staffers gave us their cards, as well as offered to connect us with other key staff members, especially schedulers for meetings in NH.