

2026



ADVOCATE'S

GLOSSARY



TERMS TO KNOW FOR
FAITH-BASED ADVOCACY

We all know jargon can be confusing, and the government is full of acronyms and words that you might not use in everyday life. As we enter a new season of advocacy, here are a few terms to know to help keep you in the loop.

ADVOCATE

Someone who speaks, educates, or takes action in support of an issue or community.

AMENDMENT

A change or addition made to a bill or a law.

AMERICA FIRST GLOBAL HEALTH STRATEGY

A new U.S. foreign policy framework released by the Department of State that pivots international health assistance to directly serve American national security, economic interests, and self-reliance goals.

APPROPRIATIONS

Legislation that authorizes the expenditure of government funds for a specific purpose.

BILL

A proposed law that is authored by a member of Congress and voted on by the House and the Senate. Also called **LEGISLATION**.

COMMITTEE

A group of congressional members with jurisdiction over specific issues such as budget or foreign policy. Key committees include Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC), House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC), and Appropriations.

CONGRESS

The legislative branch of government which consists of both the Senate and the House of Representatives—535 voting members in total (100 senators and 435 representatives).

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

A geographical division in your state which determines who your elected representatives are.

CONSTITUENT

A voting member of a community with the power to elect representatives to Congress to represent their district.

COSPONSOR

A member of Congress who adds their name to a bill to show their support.

DEVELOPMENT A long-term approach to eliminating global poverty, different from and supplementing humanitarian relief work.

FISCAL YEAR (FY)

The 12-month accounting period used by the federal government. The federal fiscal year begins October 1 and ends September 30 of the following calendar year.



GLOBAL HEALTH

Efforts to improve health outcomes across countries and populations through prevention, treatment, health systems, research, and other interventions.

GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY

The mobilization of everyday people and communities to influence public policy through actions such as calls, letters, meetings, social media, and local engagement.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The larger chamber of Congress, whose 435 voting members each serve two-year terms. The number of representatives per state depends on population.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (formerly referred to as Foreign Aid)

Funding given from one country to another, or to multilateral institutions, to support global peace, security, and development efforts and to provide humanitarian relief in times of crisis. The U.S. currently allocates less than 1 percent of the federal budget to poverty-focused humanitarian assistance.

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

An organization that carries out programs or activities funded or supported by a government agency, donor, or other institutions.



LAW

A bill that has passed in both the Senate and the House of Representatives and has been signed by the president.

LEAVE-BEHIND

A brief document or resource provided to a congressional office after or during a meeting to share key information and reinforce the advocacy request.

LOBBYING

Seeking to influence someone in power, particularly in politics.

MATERNAL, NEWBORN AND CHILD HEALTH (MNCH)

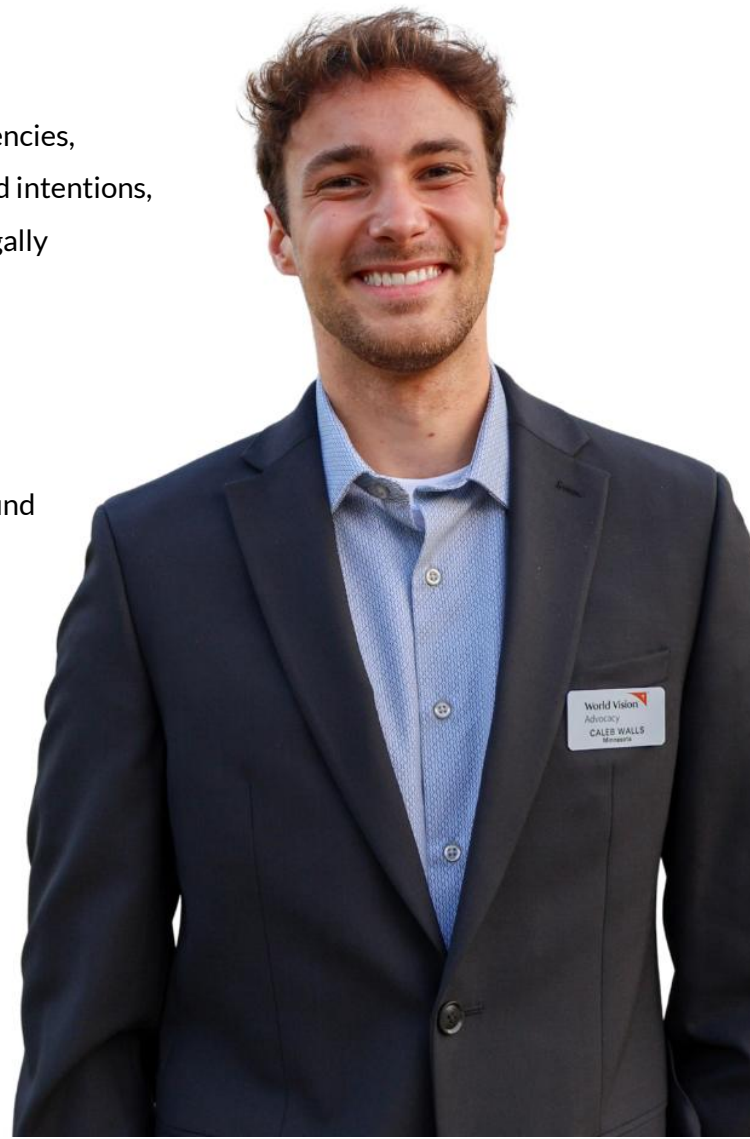
Programs and policies that improve the health and survival of mothers, newborns, and children, including areas such as prenatal care, safe childbirth, immunization, nutrition, and prevention and treatment of childhood illnesses.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

A formal, written agreement between two or more agencies, departments, or external agencies that outlines shared intentions, goals, roles, or areas of cooperation. MOUs are not legally binding but express a mutual intent to work together.

MULTILATERAL AID

Funding given to international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, to reduce global poverty. Multilateral institutions pool contributions from multiple governments and distribute funds to countries in need and organizations serving them, like World Vision.



POLICY

A high-level plan or guiding principle that outlines the general goals and actions of the government. Laws passed by the House and Senate dictate and guide U.S. policies in relation to humanitarian assistance and global development.

RECESS

A break in the congressional proceedings. Typically refers to longer breaks taken during holiday periods, when members of Congress are home in their district.

ROI (RETURN ON INVESTMENT)

A simple way to measure how much profit or loss you make on something compared to how much it cost. In advocacy and development conversations, ROI may be used more broadly to describe the impact generated by resources invested.

SENATE

The smaller body of Congress, whose terms last six years. In total, there are 100 voting senators, with two representing each state.

SESSION

The annual series of meetings of a Congress is called a session. Each Congress has two one-year sessions. Additionally, the Senate and House are each said to be “in session” when meeting on any particular day.

SPONSOR

The member of Congress who introduces a bill.



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