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**Command Policy**

**AIR FORCE RELATIONS WITH CONGRESS**



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This instruction implements AFDPO 90-4, Relations with Congress, AFI 90-401, Air Force Regulations with Congress and AFSPC Supplement 1. It expands on AFI 90-401 by providing guidance, assigning responsibilities and establishing procedures for Space and Missile Systems Center (SMC) personnel who respond to congressional inquiries. This instruction provides guidance for establishing and operating the Congressional Inquiry process at Los Angeles Air Force Base (LAAFB). Specifically, it establishes the policy and procedures for handling inquiries. This instruction applies to all SMC personnel and all personnel of those units assigned or attached to SMC or physically located at LAAFB. This instruction does not apply to the Air National Guard or US Air Force Reserve unit and members.

**1. General.** SMC is responsible for complying with the provisions of AFI 90-401. To meet these responsibilities in a prompt, factual and consistent manner, the SMC Commander (SMC/CC) has established the Inspector General (SMC/IG) as the center's office of primary responsibility (OPR) for congressional inquiries. You can reach this office at DSN 833-0802, commercial (310) 363-0802, FAX DSN 833-0760, commercial (310) 363-0760.

- 1.1. The SMC/CC has also established SMC/DS as the OPR for official visits by members of Congress and congressional staff.
- 1.2. SMC/DS will provide wide dissemination of programmatic information to SMC senior leadership and two-letter offices.

**2. Responsibilities.**

- 2.1. The SMC/IG will be responsible for all congressional inquiries that fall under AFI 90-301, Inspector General Complaints.
- 2.2. The SMC/IG will fax copies to congressional inquiries received directly from congressional offices to SAF/LLI and HQ AFMC/XPP within 24 hours of receipt.
- 2.3. SMC Directorates/Offices and Field Units Responsibilities.

2.3.1. Report non-programmatic congressional inquiries, whether written or verbal, to SMC/IG within one working day of notification. Organizations will hand deliver a copy of the tasker, complaint, and any attachments to the SMC/IG immediately.

2.3.2. System Program Offices (SPOs) may respond directly to SAF/AQ requests for support to congressional inquiries for which they are the OPR.

**3. Procedures.** The following procedures are established to process Congressional/High Level Inquiries received by local commanders.

3.1. Authorization for release of classified material must be processed by SMC/AXP.

3.2. The SMC/IG will coordinate on all staff replies to Congressional/High Level inquiries and information provided to congressional committees, members of Congress, and their staff.

3.3. In the event of a Congressional/High Level inquiry requiring inputs from more than one organization, the SMC/IG will identify the appropriate OPR and Office of Collateral Responsibilities (OCRs). The SMC/IG will hand deliver a hard copy file to the OPR for action. All others will receive an e-mail tasking message that contains the appropriate documents. Taskings will be directed to the responsible OPR with information copies to intervening organizational levels.

3.3.1. The tasking message will identify intermediate suspenses for completing the proposed response and initiating the coordination process in order to ensure that the package reaches the SMC Command Section for release approval in sufficient time to meet the bottom line suspense.

3.3.2. Tasking and proposed responses to Congressional/High Level inquiries will be hand-carried between organizations. "Shotgun" and/or e-mail coordination may be utilized to expedite the process.

3.4. Ensure all congressional inquiries are coordinated through the SMC Command Section for approval.

3.5. Notification: For all Congressional/High Level inquiries, ensure you provide SMC/IG with the following information: unit impacted, name of Member of Congress or staffer generating the inquiry, topic, OPR (include DSN phone number), date of receipt, due date (if any), and date of completion.

3.6. Generate a staff package to include a staff summary sheet (SSS) showing the coordination of all appropriate offices. Ensure all staff packages, as a minimum, are coordinated by SMC/JA. SMC/IG must be the last entry for coordination before listing the SMC/CC. SMC/IG must also be the very last entry on the SSS and with an action identified as "process." All supporting documentation will also be included in the package.

3.7. For congressional inquiries received directly from a Member of Congress: the staff package will include a response letter (in personal letter format) for the Member of Congress signed by the senior colonel in the chain of the inquiry or by the Center Commander. The response should follow the guidance in [Attachment 1](#).

3.8. For congressional inquiries received from any Air Force staff agency, the staff package will include a proposed response letter to the Member of Congress in the form of a double-spaced draft personal letter and a memorandum transmitting the proposed response.

3.9. For high level inquiries received from any Air Force staff agency, the staff package will include a proposed response to the complainant in the form of a double-spaced draft personal letter and a memorandum transmitting the proposed response.

3.10. No response will leave the base without first getting SMC Command Section approval.

3.11. The suspense for getting the response to the SMC/IG will be no later than three to five work days from receipt of the inquiry. Due to short suspense, the SMC/IG is authorized direct communication with the SMC/CC or their designated representative regarding Congressional/High Level inquiries. Proposed responses will be fully coordinated but processing through SMC command section, information management is waived.

3.12. Whenever possible, the SMC/CC will serve as the approval and release authority for all Congressional/High Level Inquiries. When the SMC/CC is unavailable, the Executive Director or Vice Commander or designated command representative will serve as the approval and release authority. Time sensitive matters requiring expedited processing will be pre-coordinated by telephone with the SMC/CCE.

BRIAN A. ARNOLD, Lt Gen, USAF  
Commander

## Attachment 1

### HELPFUL HINTS ON ANSWERING INQUIRIES

1. Read the inquiry thoroughly.  
Both the constituent's correspondence and the Congressman's letter
2. Ensure your proposal response to the inquirer:
  - thoroughly addresses all the issues,
  - answers each and every question (constituent's and congressman's),
  - has the highest degree of integrity,
  - is not defensive or emotional,
  - doesn't add extraneous information, and
  - is easy to understand and flows smoothly.

**NOTE:** Please understand that AQC and/or Legislative Liaison may choose to edit your response; nonetheless, they need your suggested response back to the inquirer IAW above guidelines.

3. If additional information relevant to the response is known, which may be essential to understanding the constituent's complaint, tell them by separate memo. In other words, no surprises please. A separate memo is internal to Air Force and allows you the freedom to provide other information in a more forthright manner, which you believe necessary for the reviewer's understanding.
4. If you receive an inquiry that has broad assertions/allegations, they too need to be answered, and you may have to get other commanders involved. Remember, this response is answering for the Air Force.
5. Coordinate your response with:
  - appropriate high levels of management at your location
  - your labor advisor, if this is a labor issue,
  - your legal advisor, if appropriate,
  - your small business specialist, if this is a small business issue, and
  - your MAJCOM.

**NOTE:** For AFSPC, in-turn review by the MAJCOM is waived.