

Dear Fellow RPCV,

I have been trying to write this brief report of my experiences in Washington with the PC Advocacy group for over a month now. But alas, I have been both derelict and delinquent.

As you may remember, the celebration of the PC 40 + 1 years was held in Washington DC on June 20. As part of that celebration, about 150 RPCV's organized to form a group to advocate with congress. The issues addressed by the advocacy groups were:

- Support increasing PC appropriations in FY03 from \$285M to \$320M.
- Support doubling the PC in 5 years from 7000 volunteers to 15000 volunteers by 2007
- Support the new mandate for the PC called" PC charter for the 21st century" which includes the above funding goals but also includes a 4th goal for the PC (i.e. spreading world peace), independence from the Freedom corps, better utilization of RPCV's and establishment of an advisory council.

There were about 12 volunteers from NY. We divided into two groups. My group talked with congressional aids for 4 congressmen, including John Sweeney, and Senator Hillary Clinton. The second group talked with an amazing 7 congressmen. The aides were quite attentive and obligingly indicated they would talk to the congressmen. The Offices we visited included:

Jerrold Nadler, 8th District  
Louise Slaughter, 28th District  
Nita Lowey, 18th District  
Charles Rangel, 15th District  
Joseph Crowley, 7th District  
Ben Gilman, 20th District  
John Baldacci, 2nd District of Maine  
John Sweeney, 22nd District  
James Walsh, 25th District  
Senator Hillary Clinton

As for the Advocacy Day as a whole, over 100 members of congress were contacted by the advocates. That represents about 20% of the 535 members of congress, Senate and House; not bad for ones day's work!

On a personal note, I was impressed by the legislative aides. They are generally young, very smart and well mannered recent college graduates. These people have the representative's ear so they have some power. It is a little scary that such young people have so much power. Not to be too naïve, however, I know the aides don't make the decisions but they do have input. Also I was completely underwhelmed by the congressional offices. They were small and crowded, not the luxury offices I expected.

Finally, I don't expect one visit to a Congressmen's office is going to getting \$550 million for the Peace Corps. I do believe that if a 100 people show a strong desire for increased funding for the Peace Corps, that funding will come. It needs people to make the effort. So if you'd like to play a part, I need the help.

Sincerely,  
Terry Amrhein  
RPCV Swaziland, 73-76