

In the age of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, Congress has admittedly been a little slow to keep pace with the private sector in tapping into the ever-expanding virtual world. However, changes are underway on Capitol Hill. Legislative activity is getting easier to monitor on-line and information about the workings of Congress, including committee schedules and expense reports – once only available to the astute researcher – is now accessible to everyone.

Today, most people prefer to email their congressperson or post a message on his/her social media site rather than pick up the phone or write a letter. And, not surprisingly, in many congressional offices the Internet has nearly replaced the U.S. mail as the medium of choice in conveying information to citizens. Like many of you, most Members of Congress as well as congressional committees now have Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts, allowing you to follow their activities. For most, you can sign up by visiting the website of the congressperson or committee.

The best place to start in your journey is the revamped House site, <http://www.house.gov>.

Here you will find a window with menu choices of current House floor activity, votes and bills. House.gov also offers live video of the House floor, a searchable index of all House members, House leadership and House committees. A similar site worth bookmarking is the House Clerk, <http://clerk.house.gov/>.

The House Rules Committee web site posts advance information about all bills to be voted on by the House. You can find the Rules Committee at <http://www.rules.house.gov/>.

Once you are finished visiting the House, the U.S. Senate also offers a comprehensive web site offering access to Senate offices and committees. You can get there by clicking: <http://www.senate.gov/>.

If you want to take a look at our historic and stately capitol building, you can visit the official site of the new U.S. Capitol Visitor's Center: <http://www.visitthecapitol.gov/> .

Finally, my congressional web site is <http://bonner.house.gov> . When you visit my site, look under "Contact Jo" in the overhead menu bar to send me an email. You can also access my latest press releases, newsletters, and radio shows and find links to my social media sites. You will also find information on how to obtain official tour tickets to Washington attractions, apply for a U.S. military academy appointment, seek congressional internships or have a U.S. flag flown over the Capitol. A listing of all my offices and their addresses and phone numbers can also be found on my web site.

One part of the grand tradition of the House of Representatives that is coming to an end in part due to the rise of the Internet is the historic House page program. In existence since the earliest days of Congress, the page program has afforded thousands of young men and women from across America with the rare opportunity to serve Congress during a portion of their High School years. Some have even gone on to become Members of Congress themselves.

I've been honored to nominate several pages from South Alabama. Over the years, pages have primarily served as message carriers between congressional offices and the House floor. However, since the Internet has largely usurped the role of pages, the House leadership recently announced the program will officially end on August 31.

Service Academy Appointments:

I am pleased to announce that eight outstanding young people from South Alabama have

recently been selected by the U.S. Service Academies for the incoming Class of 2015. Each of these students was nominated by my office in December.

Michael Bentley of Mobile, Blaize Dunn of Chunchula, and Chris Pierce of Daphne have each received appointments to the U.S. Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs. Quintin Howard of Mobile, John Jarreau and Clayton Stanley of Theodore have each received appointments to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Kendall Gibson of Mobile and Tyler Martenstein of Fairhope have received appointments to the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis. Congratulations!

In order to receive an appointment to the U.S. Air Force Academy, the U.S. Military Academy, the U.S. Naval Academy or the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, an individual must first receive a nomination from his or her U.S. Representative or Senator.

I am currently taking applications for the Class of 2016, which will enter the academies in July 2012. For more information, please visit my web site or contact Mrs. Brooks Chew in my Mobile office at 251-690-2811.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721 or visit my website at <http://bonner.house.gov/> .

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