**Pre-Shadow Day Tools**

**Sample Press Release**

**Rep. *INSERT NAME* to team up with young constituent for 4th Annual "Congressional Foster Youth Shadow Day"**

WASHINGTON --Rep. **INSERT NAME** announced today that s/he will pair up with ***INSERT FOSTER YOUTH NAME* from *INSERT CITY*** for the 4th Annual "Congressional Foster Youth Shadow Day" on Wednesday, May 20, 2015 [Youth name] will join more than 60 foster youth and alumni from across the country traveling to Washington, DC to accompany members of Congress to work and get a behind-the-scenes look at the House of Representatives.

***INSERT NAME OF FOSTER YOUTH*** has a full day planned. He/She will\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**INSERT SOME OF THE ACTIVITIES THAT YOUR OFFICE HAS PLANNED FOR THE YOUTH.**

"I look forward to welcoming ***INSERT NAME OF FOSTER YOUTH*** as a part National Foster Care Month," said Rep. ***INSERT NAME.*** "There are more than 400,000 youth in the foster care system, and we need to make sure the system is working well for all our children. As a member of Congress I am committed to ensuring that every child has a safe, supportive and permanent family.”

***INSERT NAME OF FOSTER YOUTH*** will also attend a “Champions of Change” event at the White House where foster youth as well as professionals who are committed to helping our nation’s foster youth will be honored and will be at a luncheon featuring former foster youth and *Young and the Restless Actress* Victoria Rowell.

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**Shadow Day Communication Tools**

**Recommended Talking Points**

***Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth Shadow Day***

* The bipartisan Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth unites over 140 Members of Congress to examine the challenges facing all foster youth and develop bipartisan policy initiatives.
* Congressional Foster Youth Shadow Day 2015 brings more than 60 foster youth from across the country to the nation’s capital and pairs them with Members of Congress.
* Shadow Day allows foster youth to share their experiences in foster care directly with Congress to help inform and improve child welfare policy.
* The child welfare system directly impacts their lives, so it’s important foster youth voices are heard here in Congress.

***General Foster Care***

* There are more than 400,000 youth in the foster care system (is this a quote we usually use? )We need to develop approaches to ensure that our nation's vulnerable yet resilient youth are provided with the opportunities and support necessary to succeed.
* Every child deserves a safe, supportive and permanent family.

***Child Welfare Funding***

* We need to invest more of our federal child welfare funding in preventing child abuse and neglect and less in removing kids from their homes and placing them in foster care.
* States need the flexibility to invest in innovative and evidence-based interventions to safely reduce the need for foster care in the first place.
* We shouldn’t try to fit children into funding. We need to fit funding to the needs of a child.
* We need to promote strong and healthy families by making more types of services available to vulnerable children and parents before serious risk has developed or harm has occurred – simple things such as parenting classes, support groups, and appropriate cribs.
* We must make it easier for child welfare agencies to invest federal money in programs that support both safety and timely permanent homes for children, so children aren’t bouncing from home to home to home.

***“Aging Out”***

* The experiences of youth transitioning out of the foster care system without a permanent home place them at a higher risk for unemployment, poor educational outcomes, health issues, early parenthood, long-term dependency on public assistance, increased rates of incarceration, and homelessness.
* We must work hard to reverse these trends by creating permanent homes for young people in foster care much faster – either through reunification, kinship care, guardianship, or adoption.

**Social Media**

*Social Media Tips for Foster Youth Shadow Day*

Don’t have a camera? Email Elsa.OCallaghan@mail.house.gov to sign up for a photo with your boss & their shadow.

* Make sure your member is wearing their Foster Care Awareness Ribbon
* Add **#FosterYouthVoices** and **#DCShadowDay** to your social media posts
* Email photos and video to Elsa.OCallaghan@mail.house.gov
* Share compelling points of your shadow’s bio
* Clip your member’s floor statement for YouTube at [portal.houselive.gov](http://portal.houselive.gov/)
* [Like us on Facebook](http://facebook.com/fosteryouthcaucus) and tag “Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth”

*Sample Tweets*

* Happy to host {name/handle} for#DCShadowDay. Together, we can improve foster care & child welfare in our state. #FosterYouthVoices
* Inspired to stand up for #fosteryouth by {name/handle} who shared her story with me during #DCShadowDay
* Today, I’m hosting an amazing young #fosteryouth from {insert state or city} for#DCShadowDay. Glad to welcome him/her to DC!
* #DCShadowDay brings 60 #fosteryouth & pairs them with members of Congress. Meet my shadow from {city}, {name/handle}.
* Thank you to {name/handle} for sharing your story. Every child deserves a loving home. #FosterYouthVoices
* After spending today with  {name/handle}, I am more committed than ever to ensuring every child has a loving family. [#FosterYouthVoices](https://twitter.com/search?q=%23FosterYouthVoices)
* Welcoming  {name/handle} to DC today as I listen to his/her experience as a foster youth. #FosterYouthVoices

**Post-Shadow Day Tools**

**Press Release to be sent to news sites with picture of member with Foster Youth Shadow.**

Include pictures of your boss with the youth. If you need pictures, contact Elsa O’Callaghan at [elsa.ocallaghan@mail.house.gov](mailto:elsa.ocallaghan@mail.house.gov) and she will work to find them.

**Rep. INSERT NAME teams up with former foster youth for 4th Annual "Congressional Foster Youth Shadow Day"**

WASHINGTON—**INSERT YOUTH NAME** went to Capitol Hill to spend the day with Rep. **INSERT REP’s NAME** for the 4th Annual "Congressional Foster Youth Shadow Day." On May 20, **INSERT YOUTH’s NAME** joined more than 60 other foster youth alumni from across the country who traveled to Washington to shadow members of Congress to get a behind-the-scenes look at the House of Representatives and to share their experiences in the child welfare system as a way to influence policy around foster care.

The pair had a full day, ***INSERT ACTIVITIES FOSTER YOUTH AND MEMBER PARTICIPATED IN*** *and [youth name]* attended a “Champions of Change” event at the White House as well as a luncheon featuring former foster youth and *Young and the* Restless actress Victoria Rowell.

"It was such a pleasure to welcome **INSERT YOUNG PERSON’s NAME** to Capitol Hill as a part of National Foster Care Month," said **INSERT REP’s NAME**. "I want to thank **INSERT YOUTH’s NAME** for coming to our nation’s capital and for having the bravery to share his/her story with me. I was inspired with his/her strength and resiliency, and I remain committed to  ensuring that our nation’s child welfare system provides these young people with a safe, stable and loving home.”

**Sample pitch to local television stations for an interview with your youth and your boss.**

Dear ***INSERT NAME*:**

Last week on Capitol Hill, Rep.***INSERT NAME***participated in the 4th Annual “Foster Youth Shadow Day.” S/he hosted***INSERT SHADOW’S NAME***a former foster youth from***INSERT STATE/TOWN/WHATEVER MAKES IT LOCAL*.**

Rep.***INSERT NAME*** and ***INSERT YOUTH NAME*** had a full day, ***INSERT ACTIVITIES FROM THE DAY*** including a “Champions of Change” event at the White House as well as attending a luncheon featuring former foster youth and *Young and the Restless* actress Victoria Rowell. He/She also attended a session of Congress to hear members speak about the work being done to support foster youth.

This would be a great story for ***INSERT NETWORK*,** and they would love to sit down and talk with you about their experience in DC and what they learned this week.

To help with the story, please draw video from the events at this link to use as B-Roll, and you canpull photos from this link for use for the broadcast.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,