UC Davis – Policymaker Persona
Kathy Malina

Age: 52
Gender: Female
Career Title: Member, United States House of Representatives

Salary: $174,000 a year

Personality
Rep. Kathy Malina has been a US Congressperson for four years. She is described as personable, hard-working and intelligent.
Her constituents and colleagues describe her as confident, direct and sympathetic when listening to stakeholder’s needs.
Politically, Rep. Malina is a Democrat and believes that government can be a tool to affect change.
In the last few years, Rep. Malina has been espousing more progressive rhetoric as national dialogue has become more partisan and her Democratic constituents demand reforms in healthcare, gun control and environmental protections.

Career and Education
Rep. Malina received her Bachelor’s degree in political science in the 1980s. After several years working on political campaigns and in local government, she went back to school and obtained a Juris Doctor degree from Georgetown University Law Center.
She worked as a public attorney for several years and served as a women’s initiative chair at a non-profit law office before starting her political career.
She serves on several congressional committees including Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Education and the Workforce.
In addition to her salary as a congressperson, Rep. Malina makes an additional $400,000 a year from personal investments including real estate.

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Job and Day-to-Day
Rep. Malina spends two thirds of her time in Washington D.C. and one third in her home district office. On a typical day when Congress is in session, Rep. Malina starts each morning with her aides to discuss major news headlines regarding Capitol Hill. She may also discuss with her aides pressing issues raised by constituents in her home district or local issues covered by the media. Rep. Malina’s daily DC schedule is largely prepared weeks in advance, with down-time between committee meetings, floor schedules and vote times typically filled with stakeholder meetings with lobbyists and constituents. Between meetings, Rep. Malina often communicates via text and email with her staff, especially her senior communications staff members to discuss media and social media decisions.

Rep. Malina generally ends a typical work day debriefing with her staff about the day’s events and strategy moving forward. On a typical day when Congress is not in session, Rep. Molina is usually at home in the district. That can be either during a district work period or during Congressional breaks. During a district work period, she tries to connect with constituents through office hours or town halls. During these work periods, Rep. Malina will also schedule district events such as business tours, stakeholder meetings on a relevant topic or other community events such as Rotary meetings. She and her staff choose events that align with her values and maximizes her exposure in the community.

Even when Rep. Malina is on vacation, staff are still generally in contact and updating her on anything imminent. There are very few days a year when critical staff cannot reach her if needed.

Influences and Challenges
Rep. Malina became involved with politics because she felt she could serve her community and believes in the democratic process. She is politically progressive but understands that to get legislation passed he must prioritize issues that are likely to gain traction with other legislators. Often these are the issues that are most relevant in the news.

Rep. Malina listens to experts and research coming from institutions she feels are credible but has to balance a complex web of realities. Before championing new research, she tends to weigh factors such as the current political climate, opposing research, public opinion, her personal beliefs and impacts to her district. Rep. Malina is most responsive to news that could affect jobs, economic prosperity and quality of life in her area. A major industry in her district is agriculture and she is sensitive to issues that could affect the livelihoods of farmers and farm workers in her district. She is also sensitive to issue of importance based upon her personal history. For example, Rep. Malina’s mother died of Alzheimer’s Disease and she has made it her personal mission to combat it.

*Information sources: https://onthinktanks.org/articles/what-do-policymakers-want/
Engagement and Messaging

- Rep. Malina is on the lookout for new evidence (that includes suggested solutions) about pressing issues of the day.
- While Rep. Malina is interested in new research, she appreciates caution and will try to look at the information holistically and discover opposing points of view and fully understand impacts before espousing new research findings or making policy decisions.
- Since much of her work is around addressing issues that her constituents take notice of in the news, Representative Malina looks for insights and solutions to the immediate news stories. When pressing news stories break, Representative Malina has been known to call experts she views as credible that can effectively communicate talking points and solutions in twenty minutes or less before she releases statements or appears in press conferences.
- Research or solutions from experts that will translate into measurable cost savings are generally of interest to Rep. Malina and more legislatively feasible because they have broader political appeal.
- News generally gets to Rep. Malina from her staff who scan news stories related to pressing political issues in the moment or by possible legislation that could affect her district. Her aides use Google Alerts and internet searches to find pertinent stories.
- Rep. Malina and her aides spend time reading publications specific to policy makers such as Politico Playbook.
- She monitors Twitter throughout the day but generally lets her staff do the work of posting and responding on her social accounts.
- Rep. Malina and her staff have limited access to research databases. From time to time, a student intern on her team will use her/his university login to look for research on digital libraries of academic journals, but Rep. Malina primarily gets research from news stories and contacts that pass along research studies.
- A typical staffer will check in with the front pages of the local papers in the district, then check in with the big papers from the Rep. Malina’s state, then the hill publications (Politico, The Hill, Roll Call), and then keep themselves updated throughout the day with their Twitter list of capitol reporters from various publications.

*Information source: https://onthinktanks.org/articles/think-tanks-and-their-key-audiences-what-do-they-have-to-say/
http://www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/?p=10593
Potential Marketing Messages and Actions

• When creating a piece designed to get lawmaker’s attention, make sure to spell out why this is important to their district and industries of interest. Always research the member to see what their priorities are and try to connect with those issues.

• If you have a call-to-action that involves specific legislation, it’s helpful to mention if similar legislation has been successful. Be specific about where the legislation was passed and who to contact.

• As aides and staff are the main gatekeepers for information, design communications with their likely search terms and Google Alerts in mind. Think about which legislators may be interested in your piece, create a list with some information about their district, legislation the legislator has championed recently and commercial companies in their district. From there, find ways to insert a few terms that reference what you’ve found.

• Twitter advertising may be an effective way to be sure you’re getting your content in front of legislators and their aides because the tool allows you to target specific accounts. Create a list of twitter handles of your legislators and their staff. Set advertising options to only include these people and their followers. However, this highly targeted strategy will only be successful if you pair it with messaging that is carefully crafted to provide solutions to pressing issues in your target legislator’s district.

• Use statistics strategically to quickly get your point across. Some examples of this could be using large single statistics to show the magnitude of the issue, using juxtaposition to help your audience understand the scale of your issue, humanizing abstract issues by showing how many people will be positively or adversely affected by your issue or identifying surprising statistics.

• Infographics paired with carefully chosen statistics can be very powerful when communicating to policymakers.

• Release lists of media-trained experts during major news stories dealing with legislation. This technique has worked in the past to spur legislators to reach out to the university when they need guidance in policymaking.

• Be sure your content, especially about research, is easily comprehensible to a non-scientist.

*Information sources: [https://www.timeshighereducation.com/comment/the-10-commandments-for-influencing-policymakers](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/comment/the-10-commandments-for-influencing-policymakers)