



## CENTER NEWS

In June, Open World was honored to welcome the first official delegation of **Kyrgyzstani parliamentarians** to visit the United States since the new parliament was elected in October 2010. The delegation, which included representatives of each of the five political parties sitting in the unicameral parliament (the Jogorku Kenesh), visited Washington to meet with Members of Congress before traveling to Pennsylvania for a program on legislative government (see next page). During meetings with Members of Congress, the Kyrgyzstani parliamentarians discussed the challenges to their emerging parliamentary democracy. House Rules Committee Chairman **David Dreier** of California (below left, on left) welcomed them to the committee hearing room, and had follow-up conversations with several delegates he had met during a visit to Kyrgyzstan earlier in the month. He then arranged a visit to the House Gallery, where the delegates were deeply interested to see a vote in progress. During their time with Rep. **David Price** of North Carolina



(above middle, second from right) he explained the day-to-day tasks of a House Member, reviewed the details of managing a Congressional office, and outlined how House members are allocated office space and funding. Rep. Price also discussed his upcoming visit to Kyrgyzstan and planned to meet with the delegates in the capital city, Bishkek. Pennsylvania Rep. **Joseph Pitts** (above right, in brown jacket) reiterated his longstanding interest in Central Asia to the parliamentarians and described his work to foster business partnerships between the United States and Kyrgyzstan. The parliamentarians met with both co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus on Central Asia: Rep. **Dan Burton** (IN), who chairs the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia, and Del. **Eni F.H. Faleomaveaga** (AS). While in Washington, the delegates also participated in a forum hosted by the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute of Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). This event provided an open discussion of current affairs in Kyrgyzstan and of the functioning of the new parliament. The forum was well attended by officials from the State Department and other U.S. government agencies, and by representatives of the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, the Hudson Institute, the World Bank, and other prominent organizations.

## OHIO

**COLUMBUS** – Between June 24 and July 2, five professional staff members of Kyrgyzstan's parliament visited Columbus, OH, for an in-depth look at the legislative process at the state level. Highlights of the program included meetings with staffers of Rep. **Pat Tiberi**, Rep. **Steve Stivers**, Gov. **John Kasich**, and the Ohio Senate and House Clerks' Offices. The delegates were in Columbus during the week that the state budget was due, so they had a chance to review its

major elements and the state's balanced-budget requirement. Legislative drafting was covered in a session with the state Legislative Services Commission. The delegation also observed direct citizen involvement in government by witnessing the delivery to the Ohio Secretary of State's office of a petition to repeal a new state law limiting the collective-bargaining rights of Ohio public workers. Local Host Organization: Columbus International Program



*Kyrgyzstani parliamentary staffers meet with Rep. Pat Tiberi's chief of staff, Chris Zeigler (center), on June 24, the day they arrived in Columbus.*



## PENNSYLVANIA

**PITTSBURGH** – Open World’s Kyrgyzstani parliamentary delegation spent several days in **Pittsburgh** exploring the role of state and local government. A session at Allegheny County Chief Executive **Dan Onorato**’s office focused on how local governments develop budgets. Later, the parliamentarians discussed the state legislative process with state Rep. **Dan Frankel**’s chief of staff. At the southwest regional offices of U.S. Sen. **Robert P. Casey, Jr.**, and Gov. **Tom Corbett**, the delegates reviewed



*Gov. Tom Corbett’s Southwest Regional Office welcomes Open World’s Kyrgyzstani parliamentary delegation.*

the constituent services provided by elected officials’ field offices. An inspiring meeting with the vice chairwoman of the Governor’s Cabinet and Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities, **Evelyn Stypula**, not only provided insights into advocacy work being done in Pennsylvania by and for people with disabilities, but also gave the delegates ideas for ways to improve the lives of Kyrgyzstanis with disabilities. This meeting was especially meaningful for delegate Dastan Bekeshev, the blind chairman of the parliament’s Committee on Human Rights, Equal Opportunities and NGOs.



*Kyrgyzstani parliamentarians share a potluck dinner with their Pittsburgh host families.*

**HARRISBURG** – The Kyrgyzstani parliamentary delegates observed the legislative process firsthand at the Pennsylvania State House in **Harrisburg** on June 29. Their visit coincided with the end of the legislative session, during which lawmakers worked to pass the state budget. House Speaker **Samuel Smith** introduced the delegates on the House floor, and former House member **Michael Cassidy** gave them an in-depth overview of how the state legislature functions. The Kyrgyzstanis also met and interacted with a number of state legislators going about their daily business. On June 30, the delegates visited the Lancaster district office of U.S. Rep. **Joseph Pitts**, who had met with them



*Former Pennsylvania state legislator Michael Cassidy (second from right) describes the workings of the state legislature to the Kyrgyzstani parliamentarians during their visit to the House of Representatives.*

during their program in Washington, DC. **Nicholas Cammauf**, the office’s senior caseworker, led a discussion on the constituent services provided by congressional district offices. He explained that while a Member of Congress’s Capitol Hill office is central to the “pre-legislation” process, district offices mainly operate in the “post-legislation” process, assisting constituents navigate federal agencies and answering their questions about government operations.

GlobalPittsburgh hosted the delegates’ Pennsylvania program.



*Kyrgyzstani parliamentarians review operations in Rep. Joseph Pitts’ Lancaster district office with Senior Caseworker Nicholas Cammauf (far left).*

Before flying home to Kyrgyzstan from Washington, DC, the parliamentarians had a productive and positive wrap-up session with Open World Executive Director **John O’Keefe**; **Andrew Imbrie**, an aide to Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman **John Kerry (MA)**; and Open World staff.