**Topic: paying for mental health**

1. What is the average cost of necessary healthcare for someone diagnosed with a life-long mental illness?
   1. Therapy? Medication? Bloodwork?
2. How many people diagnosed with a mental illness are comfortably able to afford those costs?
3. Mental illness does not discriminate on socio-economic status, but how do those facts affect the course of treatment?

* NAMI - National Alliance on Mental Illness
* NIMH - National Institute of Mental Health
* SAMHSA - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration

I expect to find that paying for a mental health diagnosis holds many hidden and expensive costs. Although things like depression, bipolar disorder and anxiety largely affect the populus equally, the financial ability to properly treat these diagnoses sparks inequities in the severity and longevity of symptoms, and therefore the lasting reaching effects of the illness. If a bipolar person is not able to afford the mood stabilizers necessary to keep their symptoms from worsening, those symptoms might make it increasingly difficult to hold a job or go to school, which only exacerbates the issues surrounding access and care.

**Topic: staff retention in Congress**

1. How long do staff usually stay in Congress?
2. What is the demographic breakdown of staff?
   1. Age?
   2. Race?
   3. Education level?
3. What are some factors in the low retention rate?

* Legistorm
* Opensecrets
* Congressional Research Service

I expect to find that Congressional staff are largely young, highly educated white males with a high turnover rate. I want to explore some of the factors that lead to this hiring trend.