

Advocacy 101



Directly engaging with your members of Congress is one of the best ways to influence his or her policy positions.

Elected leaders depend on their constituents to communicate opinions, experiences and information in order to make more informed decisions. This exchange deepens the connection to the communities they serve and produces more knowledgeable and thoughtful decision-making in Congress. It is also an opportunity to use compelling information and persuasive arguments to shape your policymaker's views on the issues you are passionate about. Below are some examples of actions and strategies to use when you're championing an issue to congressional leaders.

WRITE

- Writing to your elected leader is a cherished tradition in American democracy and critical to relationship-building between members of Congress and their constituents. Navigate to the "Contact" tab of your lawmaker's official website to submit an email. Be sure to provide your full contact information and always ask for a response.

CALL

- Directly calling your member of Congress is an effective way to make your voice heard and establish rapport with elected leaders and their staff. Again, make sure to provide your full contact information and ask for a response. Congressional offices field dozens, if not hundreds, of calls from constituents each day and actively requesting a written response can help ensure your comments don't fall through the cracks.

MEET

- Members of Congress usually have a section on their website to request a personal meeting. You can also call the office and ask for the scheduler's email to request a meeting, though some offices do not share staffer email addresses with constituents. You can meet with them in their district, state or national offices.
- In-district townhall meetings are a great opportunity to connect with your elected leader face-to-face. Dates and times are often posted on their official website, email newsletter or social media accounts, but you can always call the office and ask.

INVITE

- It is common for congressional leaders to visit schools in their district. Do not hesitate to reach out to their office to invite them to an event your school is hosting.
- Ask them to be a speaker (opening day, special events, commencement, etc.).
- Provide opportunities to tour and interact with hands-on learning experiences (clinics, moot court, trial advocacy, etc.).
- Host policy discussion panels and invite them to participate as a guest or an expert.

CONNECT ONLINE

- Member offices use an array of social media platforms. Directly replying to or tagging your member on a social media post is another avenue to let your voice be heard.
- Every member of Congress has an e-newsletter they circulate on a weekly or monthly basis. Sign up to remain informed of their actions in Congress and the details of local events in the district, like a townhall meeting or listening session.

For more information on how to get involved,
visit us at AccessLex.org/advocacy