

Arranging a Meeting with Your Legislators



**SPEAK UP AND
SPEAK OUT**
summit



Thank you!



Knowledge Check: Pre-module Questions

1. Do you know why it is important to meet with your legislator?
2. Do you know where to go to arrange a meeting with your legislator?
3. Do you know what you should do before your meeting?
4. Do you know what, if anything, you should bring with you to a meeting with your legislator?



Definition of Legislator

- A legislator, or lawmaker, is a person who writes and passes laws, especially someone who is a member of a legislature.
- Most states, including Illinois, have a state legislature consisting of State Senators and State Representatives.
- At the federal level, there are 100 Senators and 435 Representatives in the U.S. Congress.
- Legislators are voted into office by voters in their district.



Why meet with your legislators?

- Your legislators work for you (even if you did not vote for them)!
- One of the most effective ways to get your voice heard



Constituent

Definition of Constituent

- Britannica Dictionary definition of CONSTITUENT. [count]
Any one of the people who live and vote in an area.



Advocacy

Definition of Advocacy

- Advocacy is defined as **any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or defends, or pleads on behalf of others.**



Advocacy – Different Ways to Advocate

Volunteer

Your time

Contribute \$\$\$

Educate Others

Support Causes that Align with your Interests

Run for Office

Sit on a Board



Advocacy – Different Ways to Advocate

Speak Up and Speak Out

Tell your Story:

In Person

Newspaper

Radio

Social Media

Vote

Meet with your Legislators



Look Up Your Legislators

1. ILGA Legislator Lookup
Federal, State, some Local



ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2. Plural
Federal and State



3. The Humane Society
Federal, State, and Local



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES



Arranging a Meeting

Use their website contact form to request a meeting or send an email. You may request a virtual or in-person meeting. When sending an email, make sure to include:

- your name and that you are a constituent (you can mention what neighborhood you live in).
- the bill or issue that you would like to discuss.
- specific dates or times that you are available to meet.
- whether you would like to meet virtually or in person.

Paul Faraci
STATE SENATOR | 52ND DISTRICT

HOME | NEWS | BIO | 52ND DISTRICT | CONTACT US | NEWSLETTER SIGNUP

Contact Us

Prefix

First Name (*)

Last Name (*)

Street Address (*)

City (*)

State (*)

Zip (*)

Phone (*)

Your Email (*)

Subject (*)

Message (*)

Search ...

LEGISLATIVE SURVEY 2023

FOLLOW SEN. FARACI

Newsletter Sign-up

First Name (*)

Last Name (*)

Your Email (*)

OFFICE INFO

Champaign Office:
45 E. University Suite 206
Champaign, IL 61820
P: (217) 355-5282

Danville Office:
201 N. Vermilion St. Suite 222
Danville, IL 61822
P: (217) 442-5252

Springfield Office:
Stratton Office Building
401 S. Spring St.
Section F, Room J
Springfield, IL 62706
P: (217) 782-2507

Sample Meeting Request - Email

Email Template (may also be used in the Website Contact Form):

Subject: Request for Meeting on Disability Issues

Dear [Scheduler/Staffer name]:

My name is [ENTER NAME] and I am a constituent of [Sen./Rep. ____]. I am a [self-advocate, parent, policy professional – briefly list your position], and I am requesting this meeting as part of Going Home Coalition. Going Home Coalition advocates for robust community systems so that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have access to the services and supports they need and choose to live full lives in the community.

I am submitting this meeting request on behalf [of myself/numerous constituents] who participate in Going Home Coalition.

Our group would welcome the opportunity to speak with your office about important issues such as [LIST].

We are requesting this in-person meeting to be held on [Date(s)],

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

[Your name, title (if applicable), email, home address]

Sample Meeting Request – Phone Script

Phone Script:

Hello, my name is [ENTER NAME] and I am a constituent of [Sen./Rep. ____]. I am a [self-advocate, parent, policy professional – briefly list your position], and I am participating in the Disability Policy Seminar (DPS) in April 2024. DPS is an annual advocacy conference co-sponsored by many major national disability organizations. I have been designated as the State Captain for [STATE] and have been tasked with scheduling a meeting for our state's group. Could you kindly give me the name and email address of [Sen./Rep. ___'s] scheduler so that we can coordinate a meeting? Alternatively, please give me the name and email of your staffer who works on disability issues. Thank you so much!

Arranging a Meeting

- Follow up with the office several days to a week after emailing your request. It is best to call after sending an email.
- Once your meeting has been scheduled, confirm meeting details with the legislator's office a few days beforehand.
- Make sure to read their biography, committee assignments, and priorities.
- Follow up after and make sure to say thank you!



Tips for Effective Legislative Advocacy

- Know that you do not have to go to the meeting alone.
- Familiarize yourself with the legislator's position on the issue before the meeting.
- Respect the legislator's time by arriving early for the meeting.
- Be prepared – bring your elevator speech, fact sheets, and remember to provide short, clear, and accurate information. Remember to practice in advance!
- Discuss only one issue at a time.
- Be confident!
- Thank the legislator at the end of the meeting and remember to ask about any next steps.



Elevator Speech – Helpful Tips

- Keep it short!
- Avoid using acronyms.
- Consider including facts or statistics to support your story.
- Practice, practice, practice!
- Say thank you and follow up afterwards.



Knowledge Check: Post-module Questions

Why is it important to meet with your legislators?



Knowledge Check: Post-module Questions

Why is it important to meet with your legislators?

- Because your legislators work for you! Even if you didn't vote for them, they represent you and should know what you think about important issues.



Knowledge Check: Post-module Questions

Where do you go to arrange a meeting with your legislators?



Knowledge Check: Post-module Questions

Where do you go to arrange a meeting with your legislators?

- Their websites! You will be able to fill out a form or send them an email to request a meeting.



Knowledge Check: Post-module Questions

What should you do before your meeting?



Knowledge Check: Post-module Questions

What should you do before your meeting?

- Familiarize yourself with the legislator's biography, committee assignments, and legislative priorities.
- Prepare and practice your elevator speech.
- Confirm meeting details in advance.



Knowledge Check: Post-module Questions

What, if anything, should you bring to a meeting with your legislator?



Knowledge Check: Post-module Questions

What, if anything, should you bring to a meeting with your legislator?

- A copy of your elevator speech; consider also bringing a few pages of information to leave with your legislator (e.g. personal stories, a relevant news article, information about advocacy groups you are a part of etc.)
- Another person, if you want.
- Yourself – remember to arrive early!



Speak Up and Speak Out!

Welcome to our advocacy initiative – where self-advocates are empowered to make their voices heard

Our goal is to facilitate meetings between self-advocates and legislators – because **your voice matters** and **advocacy drives change**.

Feeling ready to set up a meeting with your legislator? Reach out to me:

Sabrina Wyman, Legislative Advocacy Coordinator, The Arc of Illinois

Sabrina@thearcofil.org or **815-464-1832 ext 1016**



Resources

Going Home Coalition Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/GoingHomeLifeintheCommunity/>

Going Home Coalition Instagram Page

<https://www.instagram.com/goinghomeillinois/>

Going Home Coalition Webpage

<https://www.goinghomeillinois.org/>

Going Home Coalition Join Us

<https://www.goinghomeillinois.org/join-us/>



Resources

The Arc of Illinois Website

<https://www.thearcofil.org/>

The Arc of Illinois Newsletter

<https://www.thearcofil.org/take-action/sign-up-for-enewsletter/>

[Recordings of Modules and Slide Decks](#)





Thank you!

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