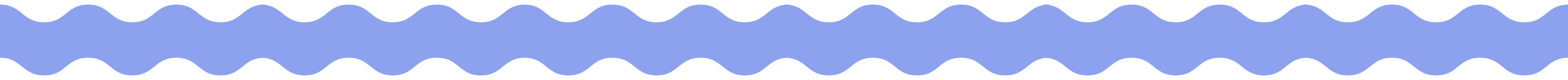


# Welcome, we will start in 5 minutes



## Legislative Advocacy Series, Session 6





# Arranging a Meeting With Your Legislator

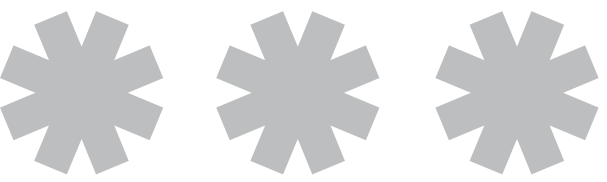


**Legislative Advocacy  
Series, Session 6**

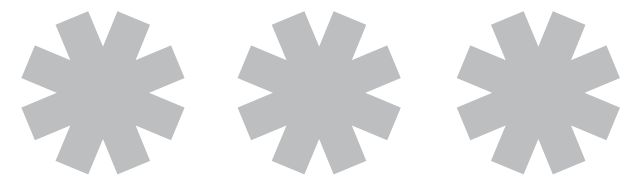


# Housekeeping

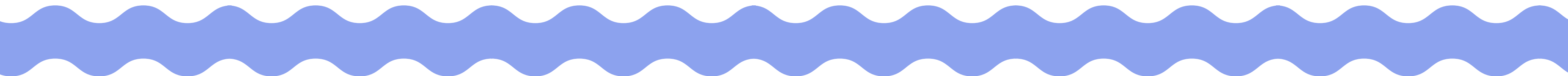
- A recording of this meeting will be sent out along with notes and a link to the presentation within the week
- Please keep yourself muted while our presenter is talking
- Please leave questions until the end of the presentation
- Captioning is available by pressing the “CC” button at the bottom of your zoom screen
- Please be respectful



# Knowledge Check



- Where can you find the contact information for your legislator?
- What are two ways you can arrange a meeting with your legislator?
- Is it okay to bring notes to your meeting?





# Words to Know

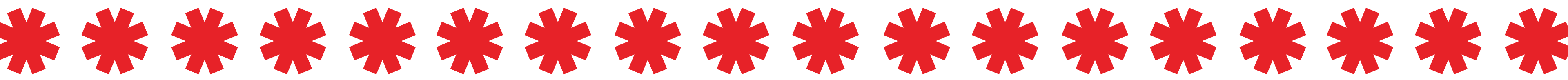


- **advocate:** someone who publicly supports an issue or cause
- **legislator:** someone who is elected to represent their constituents in government
- **constituent:** a person who lives in a certain region or district
- **one-pager:** a flyer or info sheet that is used in advocacy to quickly get an idea across
- **colleague:** someone who you work with

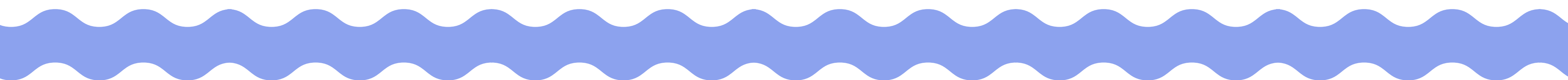
# Kaela Denny (she/her)



- Self-advocate from the disability community living with multiple disabilities, including Autism, ADHD, and a nonverbal learning disability
- Graduate of Partners in Policymaking – Class 4
- Board member of the Lake County Center for Independent Living
- Volunteer with a neurodiverse young adult group
- Honored as “Young Philanthropist of the Year” (2024) by the West Suburban Philanthropic Network
- Attended the Disability Policy Seminar in Washington, D.C.
- Fun fact: Kaela loves coffee!



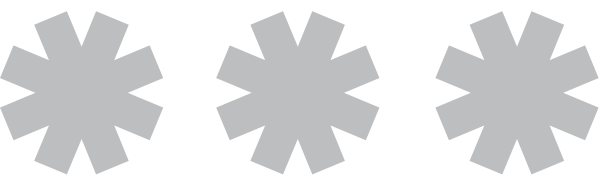
# Arranging a Meeting With Your Legislator



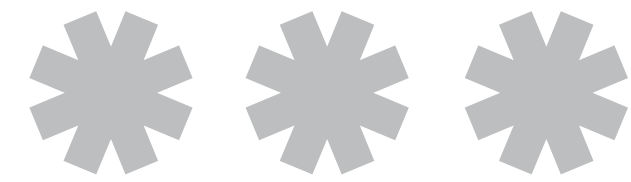
# Why Meet With Your Legislator?

- To strengthen your relationship with the person who is meant to represent you
- To talk about issues affecting your community
- To ask them to support legislation
- To hold them accountable to their constituents

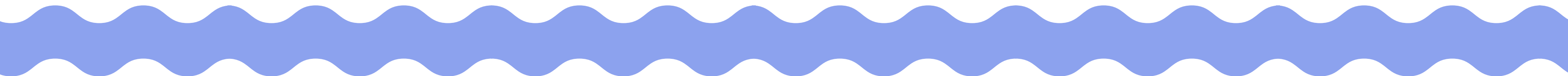


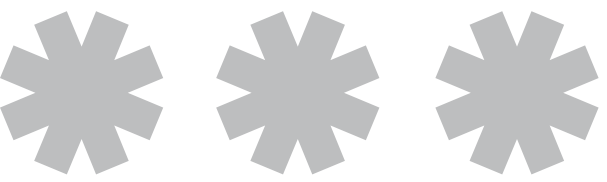


# Take the Leap!

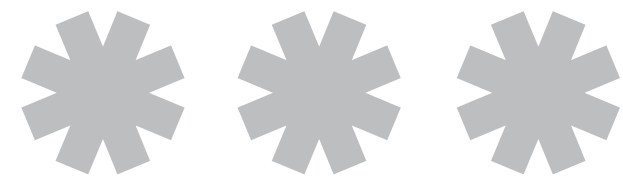


- Meeting with your legislator can feel scary and intimidating, but they are people just like us
  - They don't know all the answers
  - They rely on their constituents to keep them informed
  - It is their job to listen to and represent us
- Practice practice practice!

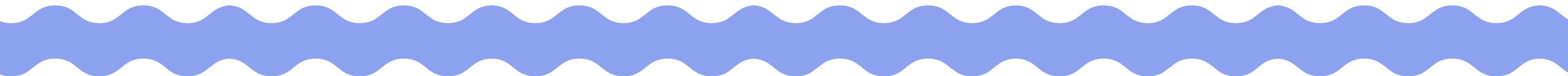




# Before You Reach Out

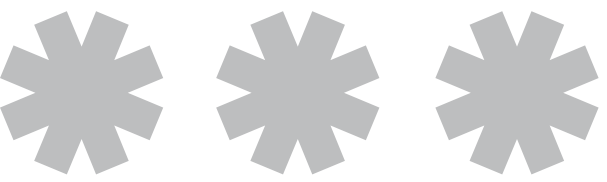


- Ask yourself these questions:
  - What will this meeting be about?
  - Do I feel comfortable talking about this subject?
  - Do I want to bring a support person?
  - Who are one or two other advocates I'd like to invite?

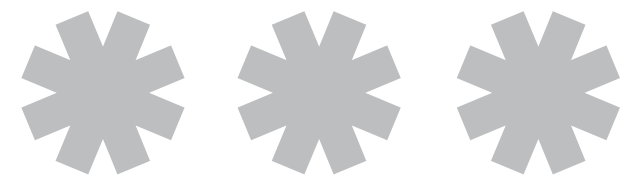


# \* \* \* Finding Your Legislator \* \* \*

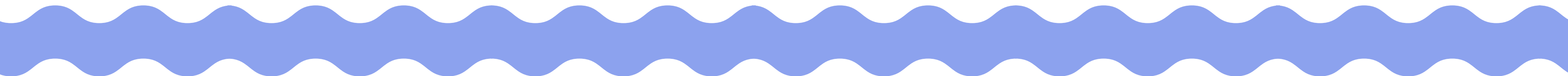
- There are many websites that can be used to look up our legislators
  - It's best to use government websites as they have the most recent information
- **Federal Level:** [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov)
- **State Level:** [ILGA.gov](https://www.ilga.gov)
- There will be a link to a presentation on this subject later in the slides



# Finding Your Legislator



- Go to either of the websites provided and enter your address
- From there, you will see a map of where you are located and a list of your elected officials
- Click on an elected official to see their address, their phone number, and their email address



Current Congress [dropdown] Examples: hr5, sres9, "health care" [input] [search icon]

MORE OPTIONS [dropdown]

Most-Viewed Bills | [Top 10](#)

- [H.R.22](#) [119th] SAVE Act
- [H.Res.353](#) [119th] Impeaching Donald John Trump, President of the United States, for high crimes and misdemeanors.
- [H.R.6938](#) [119th] Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act, 2026

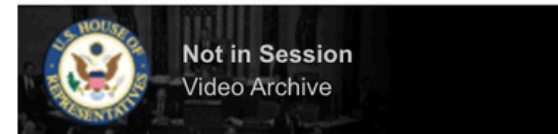
Bill Searches and Lists

- [Introduced](#) | By Sponsor: [House](#) | [Senate](#)
- [Public Laws and Statutes](#) | [U.S. Code](#) | [Statute Compilations](#)
- Appropriations: [Status Table](#) | [Search FY26](#)

Current Legislative Activities

119th Congress (2025-2026)

House of Representatives



Next Meeting: Jan. 30, 2026 at 10:30 AM EST

Previous Meeting: [Jan. 23, 2026](#)

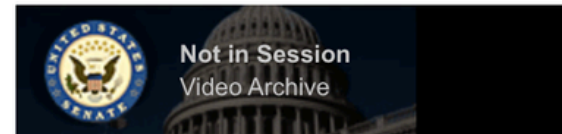
House Links

- [House Floor Activities](#)
- [Committee Hearings Video](#)
- [Communications to the House](#)
- [Bills to be Considered](#)

Upcoming House and Senate Committee Meetings

- [Jan. 28, 2026 at 10:00 AM \(EST\)](#) Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Subcommittee on Telecommunications and Media
  - [Jan. 28, 2026 at 10:00 AM \(EST\)](#) Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
  - [Jan. 28, 2026 at 10:00 AM \(EST\)](#) Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
- More: [Daily View](#) | [Weekly View](#)

Senate



Next Meeting: Jan. 27, 2026 at 3:00 PM EST

Previous Meeting: [Jan. 26, 2026](#)

Senate Links

- [On the Senate Floor](#)
- [Communications to the Senate](#)
- [Nominations](#)
- [Treaty Documents](#)

Recent

- [Yesterday in Congress](#)
- [Bill Texts](#) [2]
- [Committee Schedule](#)
- [Floor Calendars](#)
- [Days in Session](#)
- [Roll Call Votes](#)
- [Presented to President](#) [0]
- [Get Email Alerts and Updates](#)

The Congressional Record

[Daily Digest](#) of latest legislative activity.  
[Browse by Date](#)

Library of Congress Reports

[Search CRS Reports](#) Congressional Research Service Reports are available to the public.  
[The Law Library of Congress Reports](#) are produced primarily for Members of Congress.

The Constitution Annotated

Official Senate Print providing [comprehensive legal analysis of the U.S. Constitution](#).

Contact Your Member

Find your member by address:

Find address or place [input] [search icon]

Contact by email and telephone.

- [Representatives >>](#)
- [Senators >>](#)

News from the Law Library

January 22, 2026 by Taylor Gulatsi  
**Watch a Recording of the 2025 Congress.gov Public Forum**  
You can now watch the 2025 Congress.gov Public Forum that was hosted on 9/30/25 [...more](#)

[More from the Law Library Blog >>](#)

The Legislative Process



Members [dropdown] Examples: Don Bacon, Wyden [search box]

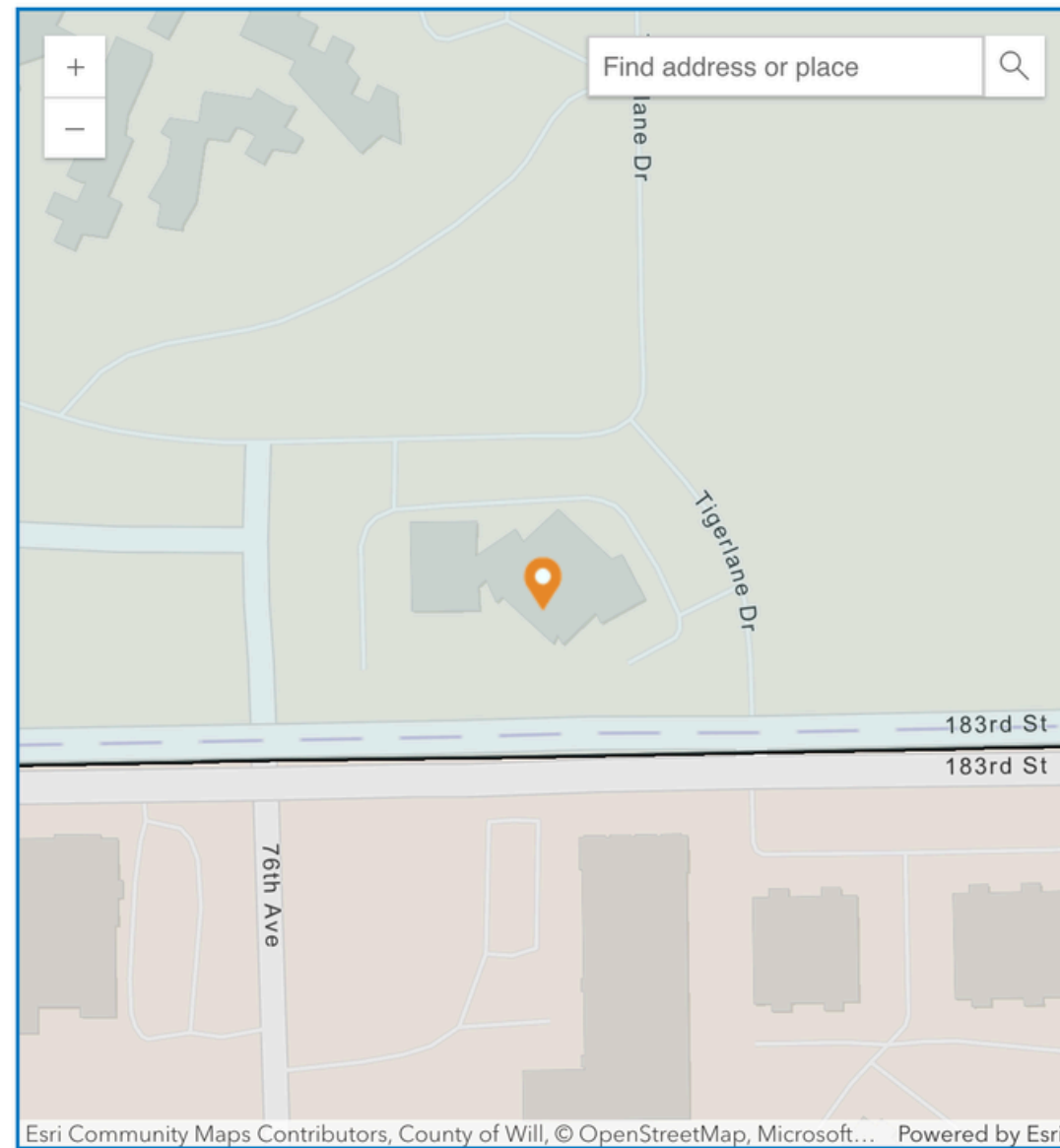
Home > Members > Your Members

Citation | Subscribe | Share/Save | Site Feedback

### Your Members

**These are the correct Legislators for this address.**

[Alerts for These Members](#)



1. [Representative Casten, Sean](#)



**State:** Illinois  
**Party:** Democratic  
**Served:** House: 2019-Present  
**Contact:** 2440 Rayburn House Office Building  
 (202) 225-4561  
[Contact](#)

2. [Senator Durbin, Richard J.](#)



**State:** Illinois  
**Party:** Democratic  
**Served:** House: 1983-1997  
 Senate: 1997-Present  
**Contact:** 711 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510  
 (202) 224-2152  
[Contact](#)

3. [Senator Duckworth, Tammy](#)



**State:** Illinois  
**Party:** Democratic  
**Served:** House: 2013-2017  
 Senate: 2017-Present  
**Contact:** 524 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510  
 (202) 224-2854  
[Contact](#)

This Member

Examples: education, "post office"

Search Within



Home > Members > Senator Tammy Duckworth

Citation | Subscribe | Share/Save | Site Feedback

### Senator Tammy Duckworth (1968 - )

In Congress 2013 - Present | [Get alerts](#)

MEMBER

Hide Overview



Courtesy U.S. Senate Historical Office

[Read biography](#)

**Website** <https://www.duckworth.senate.gov>

**Contact** 524 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510  
(202) 224-2854  
[Contact](#)

**Party** Democratic

**Senate** Illinois 115th-119th (2017-Present)

**House** Illinois, District 8 113th-114th (2013-2017)

#### More on This Member

[View Member Committee Assignments](#)  
(Senate.gov)

### Member Activity by Tammy Duckworth

[Download Results](#)

Hide Filters

Hide Tracker

1-100 of 4,160

100 per page

1 of 42

Sort by Number - Descendir

View Expanded

#### Member Activity

Sponsored Legislation [534]

Cosponsored Legislation (All) [3,157]

Cosponsored Legislation (Original) [2,024]

BILL

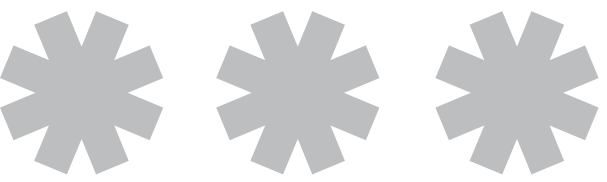
1. [S.3687](#) — 119th Congress (2025-2026)

**A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to prohibit the appointment of political appointees as Inspectors General, and for other purposes.**

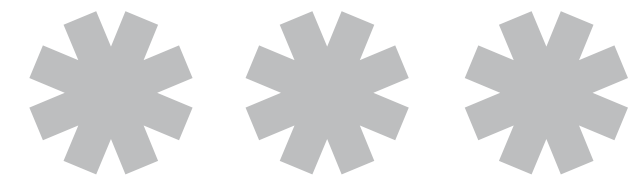
**Sponsor:** [Duckworth, Tammy \[Sen.-D-IL\]](#) (Introduced 01/15/2026) **Cosponsors:** (5)

**Committees:** Senate - Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

**Latest Action:** Senate - 01/15/2026 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. (All Actions)



# Contact by Email



When you contact your legislator by email, remember three things:

1. Start with a short introduction about yourself

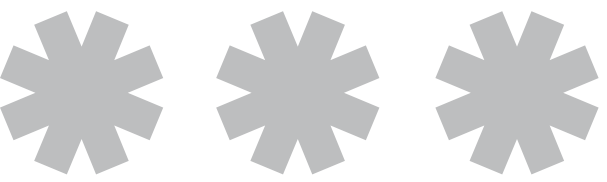
First and Last Name

Address

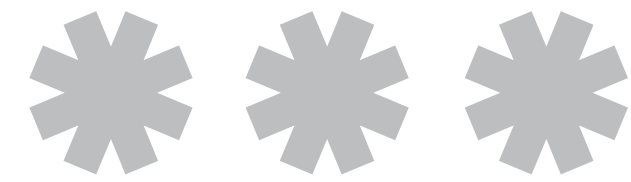
2. State that you would like to arrange a meeting

3. Pick one bill or topic you would like to discuss

Once you receive a reply, call to schedule a meeting! If you don't hear back in one week, follow up with another phone call



# Contact by Email

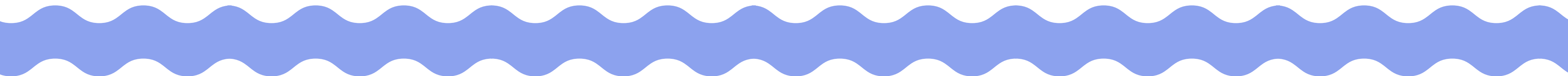


*(Your Name)*  
*(Your Street Address)*  
*(Your City, State, Zip Code)*  
*(Your Phone Number)*  
*(Your Email Address)*

The Honorable (Representative's Full Name)  
(Representative's Office Address)

Dear (Senator or Representative),  
My name is (name), and I am a resident of (town, city, county). I am reaching out to you to arrange a meeting. I would like to discuss (bill or cause).  
(Explanation of bill or cause).  
This issue is important to me because (insert personal anecdote regarding bill or cause and how it affects your life or the life of those you care about).  
I have included my contact information above. Thank you for your consideration; I look forward to discussing (bill or cause).

Sincerely,  
(Your Name)





# Contact by Phone



- Call the number provided to contact your legislator's office
  - There may be two numbers listed
- Expect a staffer to answer the phone
  - Always be polite and respectful to the staffers, they are just doing their job
- Request to set up a meeting with your legislator
- Staffers will want to know why you are requesting the meeting and what you will discuss



# Before Your Meeting



- Prepare your notes, and bring any materials that you may need
  - It's okay to use notes
  - An organization may give you a “one-pager” that explains a bill or a cause. Bring this along to give to your legislator
- Decide if you will go alone or with a friend or supporter
- Practice what you will say
- Arrive early to navigate the building and respect your legislator's time



# During Your Meeting



- Depending on where your legislator is, you may meet them in different places
  - Their local office
  - Their Springfield or D.C. office
  - At the Capitol building
  - Over zoom
- You may only have a short amount of time to speak with your legislator
  - 5-15 minutes depending on the legislator's schedule, sometimes even less!
- If your meeting is short, use your elevator pitch so that the legislator has time to ask questions!



# Following Up



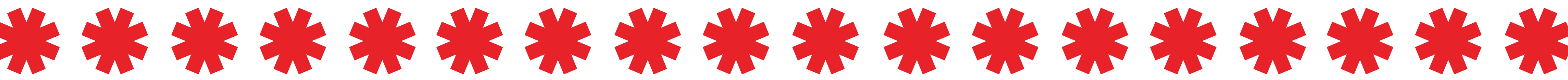
- After your meeting, follow up with an email or phone call thanking your elected official for their time and reminding them of the cause you want them to support/oppose
- Always follow up promptly
  - No more than one day, but ideally immediately afterwards



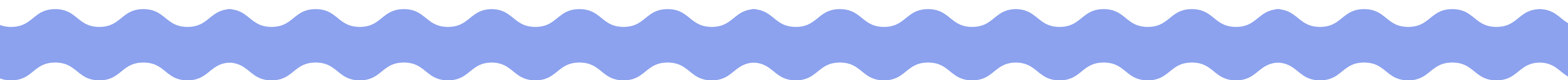
# Tips and Tricks



- Follow up phone calls and emails are great ways to stay in contact with your legislator
  - Ask them about the current status of the bill or issue you discussed
- Thank them at the beginning of the meeting for all the work they have already done
- Give them your business card if you have one
- If you don't know an answer to a question, you can reply "That's a good question and I will find the answer and get back to you in a week"
- You may ask if any of their colleagues might want to hear what you have to say



# Putting the Pieces Together





# Informed Citizenship



- “Nothing About Us Without Us” is not just a slogan, it is a democratic principle
- Real democracy is measured by whether people most impacted by decisions have power in making them
- Democracy is not inherited; it is built, defended, and expanded through collective action
- It is our job as citizens to stay informed, bring awareness to issues, and hold our legislators accountable
- Read more [here](#)



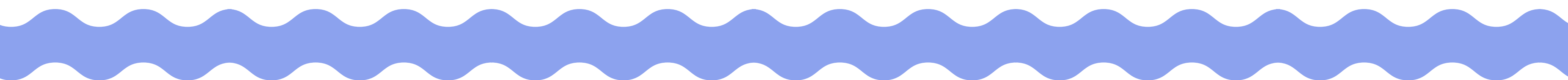
# Looking Up Your Legislator



- There are two websites we recommend using to look up your legislators:
  - [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov): Federal officials
  - [ILGA.gov](https://www.ilga.gov): State and local officials
- You can use the contact information provided to reach out to your elected officials
- Read more [here](#)

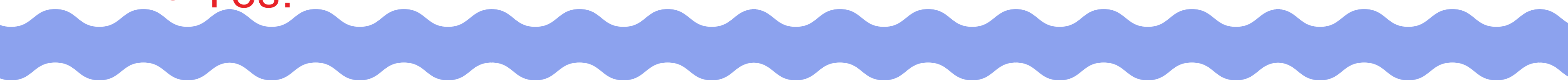


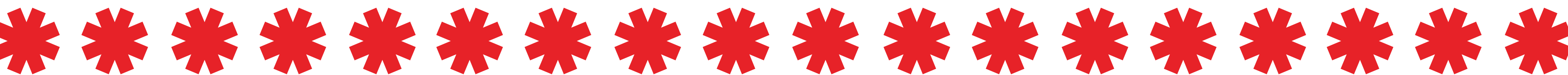
# Crafting an Elevator Speech

- An elevator speech is between 30 seconds to 2 minutes long
  - Your speech should include:
    - Introduction: your name, address, and the organization you work with
    - Present the Issue: the topic that you'd like to speak about and how it affects you
    - Your Ask: what you need from your legislator
      - support or oppose a bill
      - support or oppose an issue
      - bring awareness to an issue
  - Read more [here](#)
- 

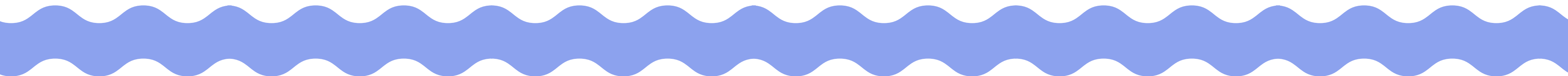


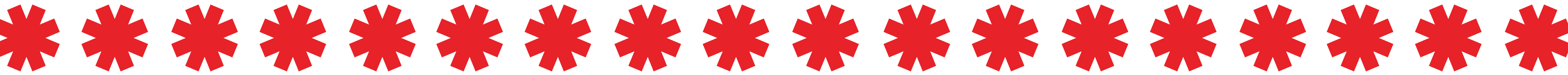
# Knowledge Check

- Where can you find the contact information for your legislator?
    - On [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) or [ILGA.gov](https://www.ilga.gov)
  - What are two ways you can arrange a meeting with your legislator?
    - By phone or email
  - Is it okay to bring notes to your meeting?
    - Yes!
- 



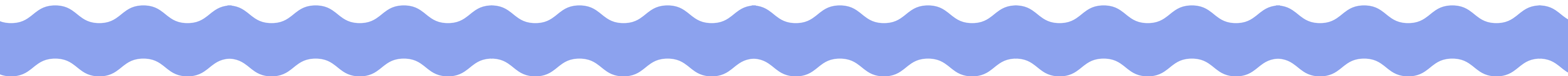
# Questions and Answers

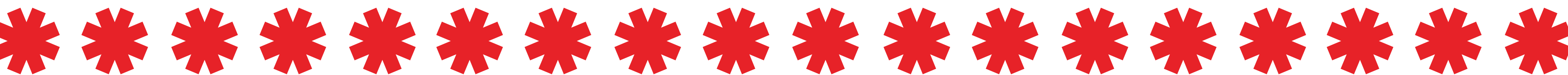




**Are you ready to contact your legislator? If so, please drop your email in the chat and The Going Home Coalition team will reach out to you directly to walk you through the process!**

**If you are unable to put your email in the chat, there will be a survey after this presentation where you can indicate that you would like to contact your legislator!**





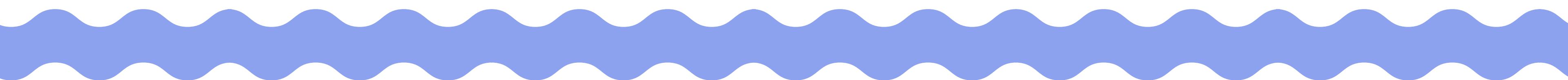
# Thank you!

## Contact Us!

**Jennifer Thibodeaux Sands:** [jennifer@thearcofil.org](mailto:jennifer@thearcofil.org)

**Rio Goodwin Perez:** [rio@thearcofil.org](mailto:rio@thearcofil.org)

**Kaela Denny:** [dennyk455@gmail.com](mailto:dennyk455@gmail.com)

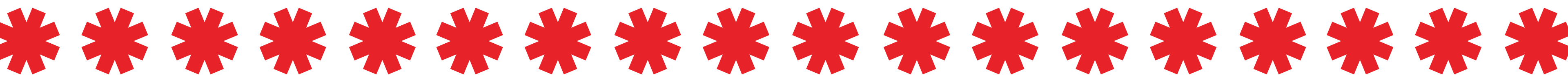




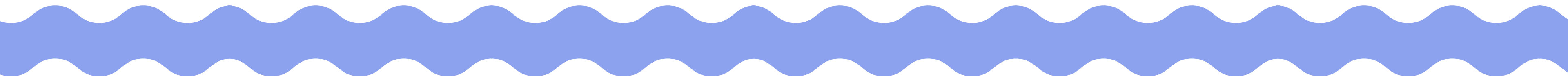
# Coming Up Next



- **Discussing Political Issues with Civility, March 2 at 10:00 am**
- **How a Bill Becomes a Law at the Federal and State Levels, March 9 at 10:00 am**



**We will send out the meeting  
recording, slides, resources,  
and vocabulary words after  
the session**





**Thank you to our sponsor!**



“In partnership with the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities. This communication is supported in part by grant number CFDA 93.630 from the U.S. administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.”