



Advocacy Tools

Engaging in advocacy doesn't have to be difficult and these tools can help support your efforts. There are certain methods which can help you connect with your elected officials and once you employ them, you can effectively communicate your position. Utilize these tips, templates, and examples and tailor them to fit your message and help you achieve your goals.

Engaging with Elected Officials:

Phone Call (Script)

Schedule Request (Template)

Meeting (Tips)

Meeting Follow-Up (Form)

Thank You Letter (Example)

Letter (Example)

Elected Official Phone Call Script

There are often times when it is appropriate and important for constituents to contact their elected officials in support or opposition of an issue or piece of legislation. Calling your member of Congress or state legislator is an effective way to advocate, especially when they are making a decision, an important vote or decision is coming up, or you'd like to see action on a piece of legislation.

BEFORE THE CALL

It is helpful to be prepared when you make such a call and this draft call script should help you to frame your remarks. It is equally important to do some research before contacting their office. You should try to find out the elected official's position on the issue so that you can either thank them for their support, encourage them to change their position, or provide further information. Make sure to have resources in front of you (such as a fact sheet and a copy of the legislation) so that you can answer questions if necessary. Please tailor this script to your specific advocacy needs.

Note: If the legislative aide is not available, ask for their email address so that you can follow up in writing with your inquiry. You may also be asked if you'd like to leave a voicemail. Staff differ in their preferred ways to receive communications. You should accommodate their preference.

Note: The legislative aide may tell you immediately whether your elected official supports or opposes the measure. If they are in agreement with you, thank them for their work on the issue and offer to serve as a resource. If they are in opposition to your position, tell them that you would still like the Senator/Representative to consider your position.

DRAFT CALL SCRIPT

INTRODUCTION

Speaking to Receptionist:

Hello. My name is _____ and I am a constituent of (Senator/Representative _____). May I please speak with the legislative aide who handles issues related to _____ (health care/cancer/cancer prevention)?

Speaking to Legislative Aide:

Hello. My name is _____ and I am one of (Senator/Representative _____)'s constituents. I am calling today about (bill name/bill number/issue) which I am an advocate (for/against). Do you know if (Senator/Representative _____) is in favor or opposition of this issue?

PAUSE FOR FEEDBACK

OPTION 1: If the elected official is in favor of your position

Speaking to Legislative Aide:

Thank you for that information. I'm pleased to hear that (Senator/Representative _____) is supportive of this position. May I give you my contact information so that I can serve as a resource on this issue?

PAUSE FOR FEEDBACK

Speaking to Legislative Aide:

Thank you for your time and work on this issue.

OPTION 2: If the elected official is in opposition of your position or neutral

Speaking to Legislative Aide:

Thank you for that information. May I ask why the (Senator/Representative) takes that position?

PAUSE FOR FEEDBACK

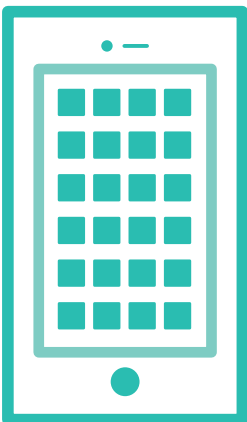
Speaking to Legislative Aide:

Thank you for elaborating. I'd like to encourage (Senator/Representative _____) to support/oppose this issue because... [Insert a brief summary of the issue/legislation and why you support/oppose it. Focus on how it affects your community. Use specific data points as well as a personal story if appropriate.]

PAUSE FOR FEEDBACK

Speaking to Legislative Aide:

I appreciate your time today and I would like to follow up with additional information in writing. May I please have your email address?



Elected Official Phone Call Tips

SCHEDULING TIPS

The Prevent Cancer Foundation can help to put you in touch with the specific staffer that you need to talk to about an issue. Contact Advocacy@PreventCancer.org for more information.

Make sure that you pronounce and spell the staff person's name correctly.

Treat staff with respect on the phone and in all written correspondence.

Keep your call brief. Staff members are very busy and will appreciate if you get your point across clearly and succinctly.

Be confident. You know about your issue and your position is well-informed.

Do not be defensive and do not attack the elected official or staff.

Have supporting documents and data in front of you when you make your call. This can help with any questions you may receive.

If you receive a question and you don't know the answer, don't make one up. Tell the staffer that you are happy to find the answer and get back to them.

If you don't understand something, ask for clarification.

Make sure that you ask for a specific action from your elected official. Be clear about your request. Never leave a meeting without making a specific ask.

Don't be nervous. Staff appreciate hearing from constituents and gathering more information to help the elected official make informed decisions.

Don't give up. If you don't get in touch with a staffer right away, keep trying.



FOLLOW-UP

You should always send a follow-up thank you note or email regardless of what was discussed in your phone call.

If you committed to sending additional information regarding your issue, you should include:

- Your contact information including full name, address, email, and phone number
- The issue or bill (including name and number) you would like to address
- Your position on the issue or bill
- Supporting facts
- Personal story (if applicable)
- The action you would like your elected official to take on the measure (e.g., cosponsor a bill, vote in favor/opposition of a bill, move a bill out of committee, take a particular position on an issue).
- A sincere thank you and an offer to serve as a resource

FIND YOUR ELECTED OFFICIAL

Do you need to find out your elected official's contact information? Use our tool at preventcancer.org/advocacy and enter your zip code to easily find their phone number and mailing address.

Elected Official Schedule Request Template

As an advocate, it is important to establish a relationship with your elected officials and his or her staff. A great way to do this is to set up a meeting with your elected official's office so you can meet face-to-face to discuss issues relevant to cancer prevention and share your personal stories. You do not have to discuss specific legislation (but you can). You can simply start a conversation based on an issue or concern that you have. Please use this guide when reaching out to your elected official's office to set up your meeting.

When addressing a letter to an elected official, choose from the following:

U.S. Senators:

The Honorable (name)
United States Senate
(Building and Office Number)
Washington, D.C. 20510

U.S. Representatives:

The Honorable (name)
United States House of Representatives
(Building and Office Number)
Washington, D.C. 20515

State Senators:

The Honorable (name)
(State) Senate
Building and Office Number
City, State, Zip

State Representatives:

The Honorable (name)
(State) House of Representatives
Building and Office Number
City, State, Zip

LETTER TEMPLATE

July 8, 2014

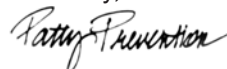
The Honorable Susie Smith
United States Senate
100 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Smith,

My name is _____ and I am a cancer prevention and early detection advocate and constituent of (Senator/Representative _____). I would like to schedule an appointment to discuss (issue/bill). *Insert additional information that would be helpful for the elected official and/or staff person to know such as why this issue is important to you.*

I appreciate your consideration of this request and I can be reached at (email address and phone number).

Sincerely,



Patty Prevention
Mailing Address
City, State, Zip Code

Don't forget to include your mailing address. It is important for your elected officials to know where you live.

Elected Official Schedule Request Tips

Each office has a preferred method of communication.

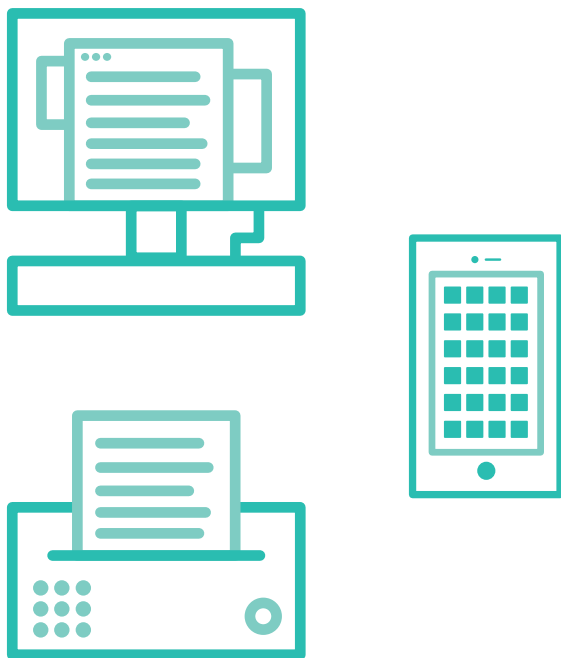
Call the office of your elected official first and ask to speak with the scheduler. Often they will ask you to fax your request but they may prefer an email.

If you are scheduled to meet with a legislative aide, **don't be offended**. She or he is the issue expert and has great influence with the elected official. You may schedule a meeting with the elected official and they may not be able to make it due to last minute scheduling conflicts.

It is often easier to meet with the elected official in their district office. If you are scheduling a meeting with a Member of Congress, **try to meet when they are home (in-district)** as their schedules are often more flexible. US Senators typically have more than one office located in their home state.

If someone will be joining you in your meeting, **make sure that you give the full names of all participants to the scheduler**.

Be clear about what you intend to discuss. Don't show up with surprise topics.



SCHEDULING REQUEST

Phone Call

State your name and where you live

State the purpose of your call—scheduling a meeting with the elected official and/or their relevant staff

Keep it short and sweet (under 5 minutes)

- The issue
- Why you care
- Who will attend the meeting

Tell the scheduler how you can be reached (via email or phone)

Email/Fax

State your name and address

State the purpose of your letter—scheduling a meeting with the elected official and/or their relevant staff

Keep it succinct but you can go into a bit more detail (1 page maximum)

- The issue
- Why you care (background and supporting information)
- Who will attend the meeting

Close with how you can be reached (via email or phone)

**FOLLOW UP IN 5 BUSINESS DAYS IF
YOU HAVE NOT HEARD BACK.**

Elected Official Meetings Tips

Please use this list of tips in preparing for your meeting to ensure that you are ready to deliver a compelling message and have an impact during your meeting.



BEFORE THE MEETING

Contact the scheduler at your elected official's office to set up an appointment for a meeting in advance. State the topic you wish to discuss at the meeting and who will be in attendance.

Practice what you will discuss with your elected official. Create clear, easy to understand **talking points** for yourself.

Address only 2 issues in one meeting. Don't overload the elected official or staff with numerous concerns.

Put together a **packet** (or several if you will meet with a few staffers) of information for your elected official or his or her staff. This packet should include relevant documents such as:

- A fact sheet about your issue
- A copy of the legislation that you are supporting/opposing
- Press releases, news stories, or blogs about the issue
- Your business card or contact information

Know your elected official's legislative background, including his or her committee assignments and voting record. Politely ask your legislator's position on the issue you are discussing and why he or she holds that view.

Do not disregard elected officials who have a different position than yours. By meeting with them, it is possible that you will soften or even change their views. Be open-minded and polite when responding to counterarguments.

DURING THE MEETING

Be on time. Plan your visit ahead of time and know exactly where you are going.

Expect your meeting to be brief. They typically last between 15 to 20 minutes. You may also be asked to meet in an unusual place like a hallway or in cramped quarters. Try not to get distracted.

Do not be discouraged or offended if the meeting is postponed or you meet with the staff instead of the elected official.

Legislative schedules are incredibly busy and sometimes it is more productive to meet with a staff member if they are an expert on your area of focus

Make a brief introduction of everyone in attendance as well as mentioning where they live.

Explain your issue and highlight the top three points you'd like to get across.

Be clear about your position on an issue, even if it differs from your elected official's view.

Include personal anecdotes, specific examples, and data in your meeting to emphasize the importance of the issue or legislation you are discussing. Show your elected official why it is relevant to his or her constituency. It's meaningful to appeal to them through passion with your personal story, but data and facts are incredibly important as well.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25

Be calm and respectful. Do not use harsh or aggressive language or make personal attacks. Do not argue.

Be in control of the meeting. During your conversation, if the legislator or the staff member goes off topic, bring the discussion back to your issue.

Be clear and concise. Get straight to the point in what you say and only focus on one or two issues.

Always tell the truth. Don't exaggerate or make up statistics or stories. Your credibility is the most important tool you have.

Don't commit to something that you can't deliver.

Be specific and request that your elected official take action. For example, "I ask that you vote for H.R. XXXX."

Don't expect your elected official or his or her office to be an expert on your topic.

Take notes during the meeting. Stay engaged during the meeting but make sure you have enough information written down so that you can follow-up.

Ask to take a picture with the elected official. Photos are great for social media as well traditional media for post-meeting outreach.

Thank the elected official and/or staff for their time meeting with you and their attention to the issue.

Admit you don't know if you are asked a question and don't know the answer. Tell the person who is asking the question that you will find the answer and get back to him or her.

Be confident. You have a lot to offer, whether it's a personal story or information on an issue. Elected officials and their staff appreciate information from constituents.

Dress appropriately. Meetings with elected officials and their staff are typically formal and you should dress professionally.

AFTER THE MEETING

Follow up after the meeting by sending a thank you email immediately and then mail a thank you letter. If you promised to send additional information in your meeting, do so.

Continue to follow the issue. If your elected official made a promise and did not keep it, request an explanation. If he or she did follow through, thank them. This allows you to develop and maintain a relationship with your elected official and his or her staff.

Thank your elected official and their staff when they've done something that you support. Don't contact your elected official or their staff only when you are upset about an issue or need to request something.



Elected Official Meeting Follow-up Form



If you meet with your elected official on a cancer prevention and early detection issue, the Prevent Cancer Foundation is interested in hearing about your discussion. After your meeting, please take a moment to fill out this form and tell us what you discussed and how the elected official or staff person responded. This allows the Prevent Cancer Foundation to determine how best to direct our advocacy efforts and support your work. Send this information to Advocacy@PreventCancer.org.

Name:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Meeting Date:

Name of Elected Official:

Elected Official State/District/Locality:

Name of staff:

Bills/Issues Discussed:

What is the position of the elected official on this issue?

What does your elected official hear from constituents on this issue?

Is a follow-up needed from the Prevent Cancer Foundation staff? YES ☐ NO ☐

Additional comments:

Elected Official Letter Writing Tips

Emails to your elected officials and their staff are important. Whether you have recently had a meeting with them or you are writing about an issue, email is the most efficient way to communicate your message. However, letters often stand out more. People rarely take the time to type, or even hand-write a letter, so by following up your email with a letter, your message will be unique.

It will take several weeks for your elected official to receive your letter due to security protocol. Once this time period has passed, call your elected official's office to make sure the letter was received by the aide that handles the issue. If you do not know the aide responsible for this issue, call the office and ask. Also inquire about the elected official's position on the issue or how he/she will vote on the legislation or support/oppose the issue. (See phone call script pg.18)

Write the elected officials who represent you. The only exception to this is if you want to write a letter to someone in a position of leadership such as a committee chair, the Speaker of the House or Majority Leader.

Be clear and concise. Limit the length of your letter to one page and only focus on one issue or piece of legislation.

Be respectful. Do not use harsh or aggressive language or make personal attacks.

Begin your letter by introducing yourself and including whether you are writing as a constituent or on behalf of an organization (or both).

State your reason for writing. If you are discussing a bill, be sure to include the bill's name and number.

Include personal anecdotes, specific examples, and relevant data to demonstrate the importance of this issue and help your elected official understand why this issue matters and how it specifically affects his/her constituents.

Request that your elected official take action, and be specific. For example, "I ask that you vote for H.R. XXXX" or "I urge you to support health care reform that includes greater access to preventive services."

At the end of your letter, thank your elected official for his or her time and offer to answer any additional questions they might have or provide further information. Include your contact information and sign the letter.



Address your letter correctly. Include your address on the email or letter and envelope.

U.S. Senators:

The Honorable (name)
United States Senate
(Building and Office Number)
Washington, D.C. 20510

U.S. Representatives:

The Honorable (name)
United States House of Representatives
(Building and Office Number)
Washington, D.C. 20515

State Senators:

The Honorable (name)
(State) Senate
Building and Office Number
City, State, Zip

State Representatives:

The Honorable (name)
(State) House of Representatives
Building and Office Number
City, State, Zip

Use our tool to find your elected official's contact information at [PreventCancer.org/Advocacy](https://www.PreventCancer.org/Advocacy).

Elected Official Letter Writing Example

The following letter is an example of how you should write to your elected officials asking them to support/oppose an issue or piece of legislation. Please use this template and adjust it to fit your needs based on the issues you plan to address.

July 8, 2014

The Honorable Susie Smith
United States Senate
100 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Smith,

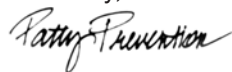
I am writing as a constituent and a supporter of the Prevent Cancer Foundation, which is the only national nonprofit organization dedicated solely to cancer prevention and early detection. I ask that you serve as a cosponsor for, and work actively to secure passage of, S. 2047, the Protecting Children from Electronic Cigarette Advertising Act of 2014. This bill would prohibit e-cigarette companies from advertising their products to children under 18.

Adolescents are the most vulnerable population to the marketing of tobacco products. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), over 80 percent of young people who smoke choose the most heavily marketed brands compared to only 54 percent of adult smokers. The fact that e-cigarettes are available in a variety of flavors, such as fruit and candy, makes them even more appealing to adolescents. Additionally, a recent study in the Journal of the American Medical Association suggests that the use of e-cigarettes will lead to the eventual use of conventional cigarettes among adolescents. This is adding to what is already a serious problem for our state. Data provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that our state has the fourth highest rate of adolescent smoking in the country, with nearly 13 percent of high school students smoking conventional cigarettes.

The use of tobacco products is known to be a major cause of cancer, this is a problem that needs to be addressed. Banning the marketing of e-cigarettes to children under the age of 18 would be a significant first step in limiting access to these harmful products and encouraging a healthier lifestyle.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I would be interested to learn your position on this issue in a written reply. If you have any questions or if there is additional information I can provide, please do not hesitate to contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,



Patty Prevention
Mailing Address
City, State, Zip Code

**Don't forget
to include your
mailing address.
It is important
for your elected
officials to know
where you live.**

Generous support from the following has made the production of this toolkit possible:



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Stop Cancer Before It Starts!



www.PreventCancer.org

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