**How to do advocacy**

**Tips for writing emails and letters**

* *Keep it short* and focus on one subject. Discussing current legislation receives more attention than general observations.
* *State your purpose* and be clear what action you are asking the congressperson to take.
* *Identify the bill or issue.* It is helpful to summarize and include the bill number or legislation title when referring to a specific piece of legislation.
* *Personalize your message*. If you receive a sample letter, take time to personalize it and use it to guide your own letter. Be sure to identify yourself as a constituent and include personal stories and connections to your district.
* *Say “well done”.* Be sure to thank your congressperson when they vote the right way or take a courageous stand.

**Tips for meeting with your members of Congress**

Visiting a legislator's office, either locally or in Washington, D.C., is the most effective way for a citizen to do advocacy. Congressional recesses are an excellent time to meet locally with your legislator (see the congressional schedules at house.gov and senate.gov).

* *Schedule ahead*, preferably at least two weeks in advance, specifying the issue you wish to discuss. Mention a preferred date and length of meeting as well as the number of people coming.
* *Choose a specific issue* to discuss and assign roles if you are visiting as a group.
* *Prepare for the visit* by researching information on your legislator’s co-sponsorship of bills and previous votes.
* *Leave materials*. It is useful to bring supporting materials or position papers.
* *Write a follow up letter* thanking the legislator or staff member for the meeting.

**Tips for writing letters to the editor**

Letters to the editor provide the opportunity to communicate your concerns to many other people as well as to members of Congress. Members of Congress read the newspaper(s) from their district in order to learn about the issues that are of concern to their constituents.

* *Write in response to a specific article or opinion* that ran recently in the paper and include the title of that original piece in the first sentence.
* *Respond quickly* (the same day as the original story appeared if possible).
* *Keep it short and focused*. Limit your response to 100-200 words and focus on a specific issue.
* *Make a local connection* by highlighting impact of the policy issue on your district.
* *Include your name, address and phone number*.

**Tips for using social media for advocacy**

**Facebook:**

* Become friends with your congressperson and contribute comments or start a conversation with your Member.
* Like and suggest your friends 'like' a page or post.

**Twitter:**

* Use Twitter to share what you're doing with your members of Congress by sending them a direct tweet or mentioning them in your tweet.