

CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

What is it?

There are a variety of ways to express your views about Maternal Health, Access to Care and Newborn Screening, ranging in ease from tweeting, calling, and writing your elected officials to meeting them in person.

This toolkit aims to guide you through the process of contacting your representatives by providing advocacy activities and communication tips.

HOW YOU CAN DO IT:

Call: Calling your elected officials is an efficient way to get your message across, even if you do not directly speak with them. Find a sample Congressional telephone call [here](#).

Write a Letter or Email: Writing a letter and emailing are other effective ways to communicate your concerns. Remember to keep your message clear and short, introduce yourself and your credentials, use specific examples, suggest recommendations and thank them.

- Find a sample Congressional letter [here](#)

Attend a Town Hall Meeting: Attending town hall meetings are an opportunity to ask questions and demonstrate your commitment. It is important to come prepared with questions, to take notes during the meeting, and follow up afterwards.

- Learn about upcoming constituent events by visiting the websites of your Members of Congress, calling the local district offices or viewing the [Congressional calendar](#) and [Congress Days in Session](#)

Schedule a Meeting: Meeting your Members of Congress in person is an effective way to influence them and their decisions. Steps include:

1. Request a meeting, here is a [sample Congressional meeting request email](#)
2. Research your Member of Congress
3. Map out your “ask” and create your message, here is a [message worksheet](#)
4. Prepare documents to leave behind, visit [tips for creating a leave-behind-document](#)
5. Come prepared by bringing business cards, one-pagers, and a notebook and pen; make sure to dress in professional attire

Tweet: Tweeting your representatives is an easy way to get their attention. You can find a list of Legislators with their Twitter handles [here](#). You can also visit March of Dimes’ Twitter page [here](#). @MODAdvocacy

Why is it important?

Your voice and opinions are powerful. Members of Congress are elected to represent your concerns. It is your responsibility to make your voice heard. You can make a difference, big or small, by communicating with your Members of Congress and the Congressional staff. If you take the time to thoughtfully express your views and follow-up with them, your message will have a great impact.

QUICK LINKS

- To write a letter or call your representative, visit this [website](#)
- To write a letter or call your senator, visit this [website](#)
- To find who your representative is, visit this [website](#) and put in your zip code
- To find who your senator is, visit this [website](#) and select the state you live in

RESOURCES

- [Policy priorities](#)
- [Newborn Screening 101](#)
- [Maternal Mortality Fact Sheet](#)
- [Paid Family Leave](#)
- More resources can be found at [marchofdimes.org](#)

COMMUNICATION TIPS

- Know correct pronunciation of legislator's name.
- Know whether he/she is a Representative or Senator and use title when addressing.
- Review relevant committee assignments.
- Be personable, courteous and non-confrontational.
- Begin by thanking the legislator for their hard work and representation.
- Do NOT make your political affiliation apparent, but underscore your role on behalf of March of Dimes.
- Opportunity to educate. Never guess or exaggerate facts. Speak in plain terms. Back up your talking points.
- Brevity is important. Have materials to leave behind.
- Treat everyone you meet in the office with the same respect as you treat the legislator.

Additional communication tips and tools can be found [here](#).

SHARE YOUR STORY & CONNECT

Unspoken Stories

#UnspokenStories gives voice to experiences of pregnancy from the joys of parenting to the heartbreak of loss. The supportive community is made up of parents, medical professionals, grandparents, would-be parents and friends who want to share with each other one story at a time. Visit www.unspokenstories.org



Share Your Story

ShareYourStory.org is a welcoming environment for families to share their story and connect with other moms, dads and families who understand first-hand the challenges and triumphs that can happen throughout the pregnancy journey.



WHY ADVOCACY IS IMPORTANT?

- To meet your elected officials and to tell them what you care about and why you care
- To educate lawmakers on the March of Dimes' core issues, such as Maternal Health, Access to Care, and Newborn Screening
- To encourage lawmakers to promote public policies that improve the health of all moms and babies

Learn more about advocacy with March of Dimes, by visiting the [Federal Advocacy](#) and [State Advocacy](#) webpages. To get the latest news, and learn about current action campaigns visit and sign up for the [Action Network](#).