



# *Personal is Political*

## *Youth Political Advocacy*

By  
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## Who Are We?



- FIRST Team 1511 Rolling Thunder
- Founded in 2004 and have competed in 13 seasons
- [www.penfieldrobotics.com](http://www.penfieldrobotics.com)
- 30+ students, 25+ mentors
- Printing hands since 2014
- Founded an e-NABLE chapter in 2017
- Advocates for STEM legislation since 2014



## *How to Make Your Voice Heard*



- Focus on lobbying with the federal legislative branch of the U.S. Government
- Elected Members of Congress represent people in a district or state
- Members' job is to listen to constituents and make informed decisions

## *How to Make Your Voice Heard*



- Ways to Communicate with your Members:
  - Write Letters
  - Make Phone Calls
  - Use the Media, Letters to the Editor & Op-Eds
  - Utilize Social Media
  - Inviting Members to Local Event
  - Meetings (most effective)

## *How to Make Your Voice Heard*



- Members of Congress cannot always meet with everyone
- A 'staffer' will often fill in
- Treat staffer as you would the Member
- Staffers are heavily relied on and have great deal of influence on the Member

## *Tips for Your Meeting*



- Once you have scheduled your meeting, it is time to prepare!
- Tips on how to make your meeting more effective:
  1. Be punctual
  2. Never assume that Members know who you are or what you do
  3. Create an outline of your discussion points

## *Planning Your Meeting*



4. Select a spokesperson and assign talking points to people attending the meeting with you
5. Know your Member of Congress
  - Research your Member's background, committee assignments, and voting record
  - congress.gov
  - govtrack.us/congress/votes

## *Tips for Your Meeting*



6. Be passionate about your issue, but be polite
7. Directly ask for your Member's support
  - If supportive, ask them to support your position to other Members
  - If Member disagrees, politely listen to their point of view, express respectful disappointment, try to counter the argument, but only if you have the facts



## *Tips for Your Meeting*



8. Relationship Building – Always be courteous as you may need their support on future issues.

9. Distribute minimal paperwork

- Keep it relevant, brief and concise

10. Know how to handle a difficult question

- Convey truthful, accurate information
- Request business card for follow-up

## *Tips for Your Meeting*



11. Thank your Member!

12. Invite them to visit you

- Workshop, events, meetings, etc.

13. Write a follow-up letter

- Thank them for meeting with you
- Reemphasize your position on issues discussed at your meeting

# *Common Problems & How to Handle Them*



- Final thoughts:
  - Stay on track
  - Recognize the tactics
  - Recognize what your Member is saying
  - React quickly but respectfully
  - Restate your purpose and ask for support again
  - Remember: Their job is to listen to you and do what is best for their constituents

## *Is it Advocacy Right for You?*



- Remember: you may passionately advocate for your point of view, but you are **not** representing The e-NABLE Alliance.
- After hearing what is involved with advocacy, only YOU can decide what is right for you and your e-NABLE chapter.

*Thank You*



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