

Science Advocacy Resources

Step 2: Do Your Homework

To make the most of your contact with elected officials, we highly recommend that you do your homework on your audience so you can tailor your message as effectively as possible. For example, find out if the official has worked on any legislation relevant to your research or if you can connect them to your research in a personal way.

Examples:

- [Sen. Susan Collins \(R-ME\)](#) founded the Senate Diabetes Caucus.
- [Sen. Angus King \(I-ME\)](#) highlights his votes to reduce healthcare and prescription drug costs.
- [Rep. Jared Golden \(R-ME\)](#) secured funding for combating the opioid crisis in his district.

There are several resources for investigating an elected official's background and legislative priorities:

(1) Review the official's recent social media (SM) posts and press releases.

- SM accounts can be found on official websites or by searching social media platforms. Make sure to distinguish between official and personal accounts.
 - The header and/or footer of an official's website often includes links to their SM accounts, such as Instagram, Facebook, X/Twitter, and YouTube.
 - Using this [site](#) to find your federal, state, and local officials will give you the official's Facebook and X/Twitter accounts, if available. (See "Identify your audience and best point of contact" document for more on finding elected officials' contact information.)
- Press releases are usually archived on an official's website. Examples:
 - [Sen. Susan Collins \(R-ME\)](#)
- Many legislators have newsletters that you can sign up for via their websites. Examples:
 - [Rep. Jared Golden \(D-ME\)](#)

(2) Review the official's caucuses, committee assignments, legislative priorities, and sponsored legislation. Have they been involved in anything relevant to your research?

- This information can be found on the official's website. Examples:
 - [Sen. Susan Collins \(R-ME\) – Issues and Legislative Priorities](#)
 - [Sen. Angus King \(I-ME\) – \(Co\)Sponsored Legislation](#)
 - [Rep. Jared Golden \(D-ME\) – Committees and Caucuses](#)
- Committee assignments for US Senators can be found [here](#).
 - Committees also have their own websites that you can look to for membership information, as well as additional information on the issues that committee focuses on.
 - Example: [Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions \(HELP\)](#)
- Links to each House committee's website (which include membership lists) can be found [here](#).

(3) Investigate which issues that are of particular interest to your state or district. Check the legislator's or executive's website for information on their legislative priorities. You can also look to local news sources to get a sense of the most important issues.

(4) Check out the official's biography to see if you can make personal connections.

- Wikipedia can be a good biographical source.
- Officials' websites often include an "About" section (or similar), which may provide information on their career and upbringing, as well as the issues most important to them, personally.
- The [Biographical Directory of the United States Congress](#) is another source for biographies of members of Congress; however, they tend to be brief.