

Tips on Speaking with Legislators

Communicating with your representatives in the Maryland State Senate and House of Delegates is a vital way to advocate for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Here are some tips to be more effective in your advocacy through emails and calls with legislators.

Personalize your message.

Bulk emails that are cut and pasted do not work as effectively as a personal story. The best way to have your message make an impact with legislators is when it is a personal story that ties into the legislation you are discussing.

Put things into context for legislators.

Many legislators are part-time; they have other jobs and responsibilities so you cannot assume they will understand the issues or your needs unless you explain them fully.

Focus on your representatives who are members of committees hearing the issue.

Bills are often reviewed in depth by specific groups of legislators in Maryland's House and Senate known as Committees. If one of your representatives is part of a committee that is hearing about a bill that you are interested in, you should reach out to them in particular.

You can always call the representative's office!

Sometimes things can get buried in emails. If you have something critical to say, it can be beneficial to call your legislator's office. Respectful reminders are helpful to everyone.

Be concise!

While legislators are there to hear from constituents like you, they can be very busy. Try your best to make your point in three minutes or less!

Connect on a human level.

Be honest in answering how the legislation would affect you or a loved one, for better or worse. Not everyone can understand what you have gone through, but sharing it with others can only help.