

Advocacy Toolkit

Connecting With Your Representatives



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Elected officials serve our country to carry out the ideas of the voters. Elected officials include positions at the federal, state, and local levels such as congressmembers, state governors, and local city council members. Officials are often voted into their positions, but some can be appointed by another official. Ultimately, these are the people who represent you during lawmaking and other political processes, so it is important to vote for candidates whose political beliefs align with your own.

To find out who your federal and state representatives are, visit: [Who Represents Me? \(texas.gov\)](https://www.texas.gov).

Federal Legislators

At the federal level, elected officials are the members of Congress. Congress is divided into two chambers, the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate is the upper chamber that is composed of 100 senators in total, two senators for each state. Residents of the state vote for their senators during statewide elections and senators have a six-year term. The House of Representatives is the lower chamber that is composed of 435 representatives. The number of representatives a state has is determined by the state's population. Due to its large population, Texas currently holds 150 seats in the House of Representatives. These representatives are voted in an election by residents of a particular Congressional district and representatives have a two-year term. Each citizen in Texas is represented by the two elected Senators and one Representative.

State Legislators

In the State Legislature of Texas, there are also two chambers - the State Senate and State House of Representatives. These elected officials work with legislation specific to the state of Texas. Both State Senators and Representatives are elected and represent a specific district within the state. Senators are voted in through local elections and serve four-year terms (with a two-year term every 10 years), and Representatives serve two-year terms.

To learn more about your State Senator, visit: [The Texas State Senate - HOME](#). To learn more about your State Representative, visit: [Texas House of Representatives](#).

Texas also has a Governor who serves as the state's executive power. The Governor has the power to appoint certain positions as well as implement legislature within the state. They can express executive orders, executive budgets, legislative proposals, and vetoes. The governor is elected statewide and serves a four-year term.

Local Legislators

At the local level in Texas, the government is often led by city mayors. The major responsibility of the mayor is to execute administrative authority and ensure that legislation is being fulfilled. In some cases, a mayor may have veto power. The mayor is selected by a vote in local elections and serves a four-year term. In some cases, the mayor is selected by the City Council. The City Council is the lawmaking body in local government. They make policy decisions that are enacted by the mayor. City Council members serve a four-year term and are elected through local elections. To learn more about other positions in local government such as the school board, the county commissioners, county judge, and county sheriff, visit [https://ballotpedia.org/Texas local officials](https://ballotpedia.org/Texas_local_officials). To find who your local government officials are, visit <https://www.usa.gov/local-governments>.

Contacting Your Elected Officials

Contacting your elected officials demonstrates that you care about specific issues and allows you to share your opinion on the issues. Building relationships with elected officials and their staff is an important step in advocating for early childhood education.

One of the primary ways to begin building a relationship with your elected officials is email. Writing an email to an official's office is a quick and effective way to communicate. See below for an example email:

Dear [elected official's name],

My name is [name], and I am one of your constituents. I am writing this email regarding [topic area, issue, or piece of legislation you want to discuss].

I am in favor/opposed to this piece of legislation/topic/issue, for the following reasons: _____ [include any information on your background that may be pertinent].

I am asking you, as my elected official, to support/oppose this legislation/issue/topic, as it will greatly impact our community.

I am also asking you to [include any additional "asks" for this official, such as increasing funding].

I appreciate you taking the time to read my email and would love to discuss this issue with you further. I can be reached at [email, phone number].

Sincerely,

[Your name]

If you'd prefer to call the official's office, take a couple minutes to think about the information you would like to share. Consider what action you want your representative to take and the reasons behind it. It may be helpful to have this information written down before calling the office. Once you call, state your name and that you are a constituent of the official; be polite and clear about your opinion and why you believe it's the correct course of action. Describe how the action will impact you as well as others around you. At the end of the conversation, make sure to thank the person you are speaking to for their time.

Setting an in-person meeting with your elected official is another method of building your relationship. You can do this by reaching out to their staff to arrange a meeting at the Capitol building for state representatives, or at their local offices in your home

district. Often, elected officials also host meetings that are open to the public that you can attend to directly discuss issues with your representative.

These are some beginning steps that you can take to build a relationship with your elected officials. Don't be afraid to reach out - they were elected to serve you and your community!

