



How to Set Up a District Meeting with Your Member of Congress

The Achieving a Better Life Experience Act (ABLE) of 2011 (S. 1872/H.R. 3423), which was introduced last November, remains the highest priority for the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS). As you may know, Members of Congress will be spending a lot of time back in their home states over the next two months. **Let's all take advantage of their time at home by meeting with those who have not signed on as ABLE cosponsors yet!** You can find out the Senate and House 2012 Congressional calendar ([here](#)) to find out when your Member of Congress is back in your state/district.

Don't be nervous! We have made it easy for you if you follow the steps below. ***You can find out if your Members have signed onto the ABLE Act by clicking on the links below:***

House: <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/112/hr3423>

Senate: <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/112/s1872>

Easy as 1 - 2- 3 Steps to Take Action

- 1) **SCHEDULE A MEETING WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVE AND SENATORS.** Click [here](#) to find out Your Elected Officials, then visit their website to find district office phone numbers.
 - Call the district office and ask to speak to the **district scheduler**.
 - **Then say this, "I am a constituent of (Representative/Senator NAME) and I would like to set up a meeting to discuss some pending federal legislation while they are home for their State Work Period. Can you help me set that up today?"**
 - Briefly explain why the Achieving a Better Life Experience Act (ABLE) of 2011 (S. 1872/H.R. 3423) is important to you as a constituent ([see ABLE Act one-pager](#)).
 - You will likely be asked to email or fax a meeting request letter with the following information—your name and contact information, dates/times you are available to meet, and the topic for discussion ([see sample meeting request letter below](#)).

ADVOCACY NOTE: Follow up on your request. You may not be able to get an appointment right away, so you may need to make several calls to set a meeting date and time. Keep calling! It's important for your Members of Congress to hear your voice.

- 2) **MAGNIFY YOUR VOICE BY GETTING OTHERS INVOLVED.** Our Congressional members need to know that you are not alone. Bring other advocates from your organization to the meeting with you. Ask them to send in emails and make calls on this issue prior to your meeting so that your legislators hear from several constituents! Tell your friends what you are working on through Social Media (like Facebook) and ask for volunteers!
- 3) **KEEP IN TOUCH AND LET NDSS KNOW ABOUT YOUR MEETING.** Please let us know about your meetings (before and after). Email (Sara Weir at sweir@ndss.org) to let us know who you met with and what they had to say! We can help by following up with their DC office.

Contact:

Sara Hart Weir
Vice President, Advocacy & Affiliate Relations
National Down Syndrome Society
Email: sweir@ndss.org
Phone: 202.680.8867

District Meeting Request Letter Template

The Honorable _____
U.S. House of Representatives/U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515/20510

Re: **District Meeting Request**

Dear Representative/Senator _____:

On behalf of the National Down Syndrome Society and [INSERT YOUR LOCAL ORGANIZATION], I am writing to request an opportunity to meet with you during state district work period. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss an important bill, the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act (H.R. 3423/S.1872), to my family.

The ABLE Act will give individuals with disabilities and their families the ability to save for their child's future just like every other American family, and help people with disabilities live full, productive lives in their communities without losing benefits provided through private insurances, the Medicaid program, the supplemental security income program, the beneficiary's employment, and other sources.

This bipartisan, bicameral legislation currently has over 127 cosponsors in the House and 14 cosponsors in the Senate. The ABLE Act provides individuals with disabilities the same types of flexible savings tools that all other Americans have through college savings accounts, health savings accounts, and individual retirement accounts.

During this meeting, I will be joined by [insert names of other attendees and their positions in the organization].

I hope you will be able to meet with us during your next work period. Please contact me at [insert phone number and email address] if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

[INSERT FULL NAME, TITLE, ORGANIZATION, CONTACT INFORMATION]