

State Organizing for The FASD Respect Act

[Note: This is Advocating, not “Lobbying”]

Julia Rivera – Super Organizer from
Texas, Kansas and all parts mid-west

1. Identify/Study Each Lawmaker

Email Chris Melfi of FASD United for names & emails of your state's relevant legislative staff members (but don't distribute list he provides)



Visit website of each Congressman/Senator to:

Ascertain whether he/she sits on a key committee in the Senate (Appropriations or HELP) or House (Appropriations or Energy & Commerce's Subcommittee on Healthcare). If so, your efforts are doubly important.

Review the lawmaker's bio, platform & caucus membership to help tailor your message

Note the geographic area served to identify constituents

2. Schedule A Meeting.

Email the relevant staff member asking to meet, either in-person or via Zoom

- A template request is available on FASD United's Policy Center webpage

Then:

- If you get a response suggesting a time/date, check your calendar and email Chris Melfi, copying Jenn & Susan. He will either confirm that the suggested time/date works OR identify an alternative. Respond to the lawmaker's staff accordingly, attaching background documents downloaded from the FASD United Policy Center's Respect Act webpage.
- If you receive no response, follow-up monthly.

3. Find Your People

Find constituents willing to participate in the scheduled meeting, either by explaining how FASD has touched their lives, or simply being present in solidarity. Constituents may be impacted individuals, care-givers, extended family members and/or FASD-knowledgeable professionals.

Generally, no more than 3 constituents should speak. Instruct each to limit remarks to 5 minutes and speak from the heart.

If you find no constituents, YOU plan to speak longer and to share from the heart

4. Prepare Your Message (focus on the goal: Co-sponsorship)

Prepare to serve as host.



Prepare participants by providing a link to FASD United's staged video and documents available on FASD United Policy Center's Respect Act webpage. Reassure any nervous participants that Jenn & Susan will handle any "tough" questions. A practice session with Jenn & Susan may be available.

5. During the Meeting (plan on half hour meeting)

When the lawmaker/staffer enters the Zoom, welcome him/her and express appreciation for his/her time.

Introduce participants and provide an overview of FASD. Be brief, about 5 minutes.

Ask each constituent to speak for about 5 minutes on how FASD impacts him/her.

Finally, ask Jenn and Susan to provide info on the FASD Respect Act. They'll wrap it up and ask if there's questions.

Thank the staffer for his/her time.

6. Follow-Up

Email a thank-you to the lawmaker/staff, provide any info requested, and include relevant documents from the FASD United Policy Center's Respect Act webpage.

If the lawmaker does not co-sponsor within 3 months, repeat these steps and meet again! It is common to have several meetings prior to co-sponsorship.