



Making Your Voice Heard: A Guide to Speaking with Lawmakers

It is completely normal to feel a little nervous before speaking with a legislator, especially if it is your first time. Remember: **they work for you**. Your personal stories and passion are the most powerful tools for creating legislative change.

1. Before the Meeting: Prepare Your Pitch

- **Dress for the Meeting:** At the bare minimum, dress business-casual. It is a matter of respect, and appropriate attire affirms to the lawmaker that you understand the importance of the issue for which you are advocating.
- **Know Your "Ask":** What exactly do you want the lawmaker to do? (e.g., "Vote YES on Bill 123" or "Support funding for X program"). Keep it specific.
- **Craft Your Story:** Lawmakers hear statistics all day; they remember stories. Prepare a 1-to-2-minute explanation of how this issue directly impacts you, your family, or your community.
- **Do a Little Research:** Look up the lawmaker you are meeting. Knowing their hometown, their background, or committees they serve on can help break the ice.
- **Practice:** Rehearse your talking points with a fellow advocate. Keep it concise!

2. During the Meeting: Make the Connection

- **Be Prompt and Flexible:** Capitol schedules change by the minute. You might meet in a hallway or with a legislative staffer instead of the lawmaker. Treat staffers with the exact same respect—they are the gatekeepers and heavily influence the lawmaker's decisions.
- **Introduce Yourself:** Start by stating your name and mentioning that you are a constituent from their district (if applicable).
- **Get Straight to the Point:** State the issue you are there to discuss right away.
- **Make the Ask:** Clearly state your request. After you ask, pause and let them respond.
- **Listen Actively:** Take note of their concerns, questions, or stated position.

3. After the Meeting: Follow Up

- **Leave Materials Behind:** Give them any information packets or fact sheets provided by your organization *at the end* of the meeting, so they don't read while you speak.
- **Say Thank You:** Thank them for their time, regardless of whether they agree with your position.
- **Send a Follow-Up Email:** Within 24 hours, send a brief email thanking them again, summarizing your ask, and providing any answers to questions they had.
- **Report Back:** Share how the meeting went with your advocacy organizers so they can track the campaign's progress.



2026 Bills of Interest

Based on OICA's Children's Legislative Agenda

These are the bills that are among OICA's top priorities for the 2026 session. Please take a moment to read this form so you can be prepared when you visit with your lawmaker or other members of the Legislature. Lawmakers' votes on each of these bills will be used to in the 2026 Children's Legislative Scorecard issued by OICA in June after the session adjourns.

HB 1979 by Rep. Ranson/Senator Hall – Would create an Early Childhood Task Force to work towards a more efficient and effective governance structure for early childhood State programming. The bill is on House General Order.

SB 1708 by Senator Jech/Rep. Tedford – Would create a presumption, rebuttable by a preponderance of the evidence, that joint custody and equally shared parenting time is in the best interest of the child. The measure was strengthened in committee. The bill is on Senate General Order.

SB 1806 by President Pro Tempore Paxton - Requires the Department of Human Services to provide extended services to individuals in foster care who are transitioning into adulthood. The bill is on Senate General Order.

SB 1591 by Senator Rosino/Rep. Newton - Would limit the amount of THC in individual edible medical marijuana products to no more than 10 milligrams per edible and no more than 100 milligrams per package. The bill is on Senate General Order.

HB 3638 by Rep. Gise/Senator Thompson - Provides that, beginning with the 2027 program year, the State of Oklahoma must participate in the federal Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer for Children program to provide supplemental nutrition assistance to eligible children when school is not in session. The bill is on House General Order.

HB 1016 by Rep. McCane/Senator Bergstrom – Would require compensation, creation of trust funds and other protections for minors included in monetized online content. The bill is on House General Order.

HB 4421 by Speaker Hilbert/Senator Gollihare – Would require Oklahoma Human Services to include fentanyl and methamphetamine in drug screenings during child welfare investigations and before children are returned to parents or guardians. If parents refuse a drug test, the legislation instructs investigators to obtain a warrant for testing. Makes it a felony to knowingly expose a child to fentanyl. Creates a fund to support the costs of increased drug testing within DHS. The bill is on House General Order

SB 1521 by Senator Hamilton/Rep. Maynard – Would prohibit the deployment of social AI companions and human-like AI chatbots to minors and would require reasonable age certification measures. The bill is on Senate General Order.

HB 4490 by Rep. Townley/Senator Weaver – Would require the OSDH to establish Oklahoma Families Thriving Everywhere Now (OFTEN) to provide operation of a telecare pregnancy and parenting support program with a maternal health component to provide community outreach, consultations, and care coordination for women experiencing under supported, high-risk pregnancies, or both, and for parents of young children. Appropriates \$3M for the program. The bill is on House General Order

SB 1377 by Senator Hall/Rep. Kane – Would require Oklahoma Human Services to provide foster children who lack a suitcase with a duffel bag in which to pack personal belongings. Also, as funds allow, DHS may include personal hygiene items or other personal supplies. The bill is on Senate General Order.

HB 2030 by Rep. Archer/Senator Thompson - Carried over from last session, the bill increases foster care maintenance payments for Resources Parents to be at least \$22.72 per day or \$681.60 per month. The bill is on Senate General Order.