

# The Advocate's High 5 Guide

You can use your hand and five fingers to help put together your advocacy message and remember it!

## #1 | Tell your legislator:

- Your name
- Where you live and that you are a constituent (you live in their district)
- Anything else about you that matters

## #2 | Tell them what you want to discuss.

- Say, "I'm here to talk with you about employment for people with disabilities" or other issues like Medicaid.
- Let them know if there is already a bill and the bill number, if you have it.

## #3 | Share your personal story.

Examples:

- "I care about this issue because..."
- "This issue is important to me because..."

## #4 | You can use talking points and messages from a fact sheet.

Examples:

- "This is important to Iowa because Medicaid limits make it hard for people with disabilities to have a job and health care."
- "More than 50% of Iowans with disabilities don't work, and some of them want to but can't."

## #5 | Ask for support.

Examples:

- "Will you support bill #\_\_\_"
- "Can we count on you to help?"

If they agree, then ask, "Can I get a thumbs up on that?!"



## Whole Hand

Reach out your hand and say, "Thank you for your support [Representative or Senator]. I look forward to working with you on this!"

## 5 Easy Steps to Create Your Story

You can use this template to fill in the blanks and quickly send a **short, clear and easy to understand** message to policymakers.

### 1) Introduction

A short introduction with your name, where you live, and that you are a constituent (which means you live in their district).

Add anything that you might have in common—for example, you both know someone from your hometown or you are both Hawkeye or Cyclone fans!

**Hi! My name is \_\_\_\_\_.** I live in     (city)     and **I am your constituent.**

[Add anything else that is important.]

**"I go to school at \_\_\_\_\_" or "I work at \_\_\_\_\_."**

[Add something you might have in common.]

**Example:** "You might know my uncle, he is the mayor."

### 2) Why You Are Contacting Them

Say why you are writing or meeting with them. What is the issue or problem that you want to or change or make better? This could be about you or your family member. If there is already a bill or policy proposed, let them know.

**Example:** "I am here to talk to you about employment for people with disabilities. I have a problem that affects me (or my son/daughter) and there is a bill that could help. It is HF123."

### 3) Why You Care - Adding Your Personal Story

Tell them why change is needed. How does the problem affect you? Share an important moment or specific example, such as:

- How the problem affected you and when
- The biggest problem you have had
- Have you had to do something you don't want to do because of this problem?

**Example:** "I want to work and earn money, but when I work too many hours or try to save money, it could mean I lose Medicaid. I am trying to save money to buy a car, but I can't because I can't have more than \$2,000 in my bank account."

### 4) Why This Matters to the Legislator and Why it Matters to Iowa

Explain how the change would affect Iowa and Iowans—not just you. There are usually talking points and facts that are ready for you to use.

**Example:** "I am telling you my story, but this affects many people with disabilities. Only 50% of people with disabilities in Iowa work. For a lot of people, Medicaid is our only choice for health care coverage."

### 5) Ask for Help and Support

Make sure you end your conversation with a THANK YOU and ASK THEM for something.

**Example:** "Thank you for listening to my story and why I think this is important. Can I count on your support of HF123? Is there any other information that I can provide you? I would like to keep in touch and work with you on this. Thank you, and have a great day!"

## The 5 Ps

- 1) Get to the **Point!**
- 2) Be **personal** (and honest)
- 3) Be **patient**
- 4) Be **polite**
- 5) Be **persistent** - follow up and don't give up!