



# AWIS

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YOUR NETWORK, YOUR RESOURCE, YOUR VOICE

## **Advocacy 101 for Women in Science**



# What is advocacy?

**ad·vo·ca·cy** /'advəkəsē/

n. The act of pleading or arguing in favor of something, such as a cause, idea, or policy; active support.



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# Why should you advocate?

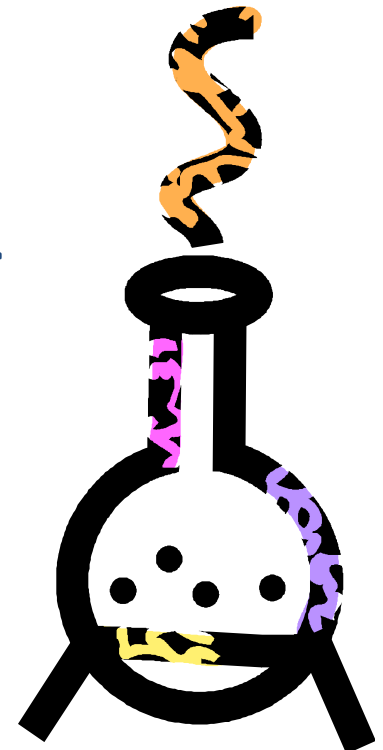
As a **scientist**, you are in a unique position to communicate the value of federally funded research.

As a **voter**, you have the opportunity to help guide your members of Congress in how to best spend your tax dollars.

*If you don't speak up for yourself and your concerns, who will?*

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# What should you advocate for?

- Importance of federally funded research
- Equal Pay for Equal Work
- Title IX compliance reviews



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# Avenues for Advocating

- Letters to members of Congress
- Phone Calls to Congress
- Meetings with state and national Congressmen
- Op-ed and letters to the editor
- Social Media



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# Getting Started



- #1 rule of advocacy: **Do your homework!**
- Identify your representatives (don't know who they are? [Click here](#))
- Read up on their positions on their campaign webpages
- Find out the committees on which they serve
- Are they strong supporters of your issues or opponents?

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# If they support your views...

Congressmen still like to hear that they are fighting a good fight and one that is important to their constituents.

You can offer to give them data or counsel if they need it, or invite them to come tour your lab to see how research works.

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# If they disagree with you...

You can educate them about why an alternative view to the one they hold has validity.

It is important that they hear the opinions of the loyal opposition, lest they forget it exists or conclude these issues aren't important to their constituents.



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# Writing a letter



- *Letters are better than email!*
- In 3 easy paragraphs
  - Explain what you do in clear, simple language
  - Explain what action or position you recommend they take
  - Explain why it's important
- Avoid jargon
- Request a follow up email or letter

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# Phone Calls to Congress

- Have key talking points in advance of the call
- Ask to speak to the Legislative Assistant
  - Depending on the member, they may have a science or health specialist
- Be concise, avoid jargon
- Request a follow up email or letter



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# Requesting appointments

- Three possible routes for state or DC offices
  - Mail or fax a request
  - Fill out a request on their website, follow up with a phone call if you don't hear back within a week
  - Start with a phone call, contact the Legislative Assistant, ask about scheduling a meeting



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# Scheduling appointment

- Members of Congress are busy, most likely you will meet with a member of their staff than your representative
- Clearly state the purpose of the meeting when scheduling so you can be put in contact with the best person
- Members of congress rely heavily on their staff, treat them the same way you would the Member

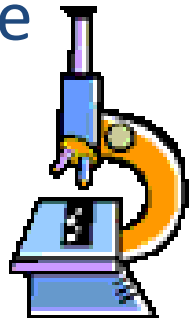
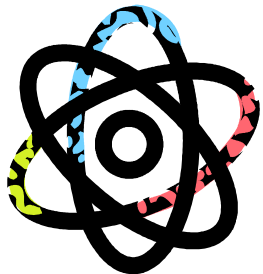
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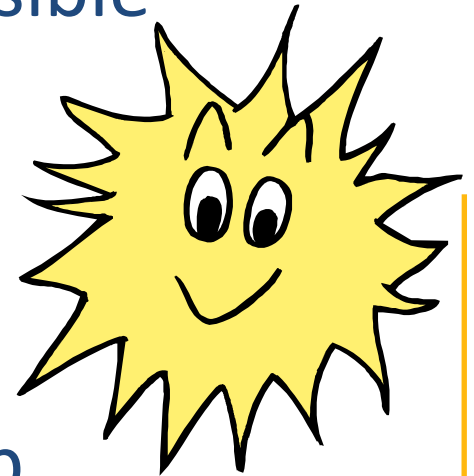
# Meeting with Members or Staff

- Have talking points prepared in advance
  - The position you recommend they take, “your ask”
  - Data, information to support that argument
  - Your research focus in simple terms
  - Personal anecdotes and stories humanize your research and make it more accessible to those who may not be as comfortable with science



# Things to keep in mind

- Time is usually limited, be prepared to get your point across in 10-15 minutes
- Avoid technical jargon, use accessible language
- Be friendly, not defensive
- Thank them for their time
- Invite them to come tour your lab
- Follow up with thank you note



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# Op-eds, Letters to the Editor

- Policymakers read them to get a feel for the local pulse on issues
- Focus submissions on local papers
- Op-eds: ~800 words, LTE: ~250 word response to story, op-ed
- Follow guidelines for individual papers



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# Writing the Op-Ed/LTE



- Keep it focused on one issue
- Keep it clear (no sarcasm)
- Keep it accessible to the non-scientifically literate
- Explain your position, tell your story
- Share any recommended steps you have for the reader
- Proofread, make sure your data is right!

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# Social Media

- Share your message with representatives using Facebook and Twitter
- If using Twitter, popular hashtags include
  - #SaveResearch
  - #WomenInSTEM, #WomenInScience
  - #WageGap, #EqualPay, #FairPay
  - #TitleIX, #HigherEd



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# How can I help?

Need more talking points? Have other questions?

Email me: Erin Cadwalader

[Cadwalader@awis.org](mailto:Cadwalader@awis.org)

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