

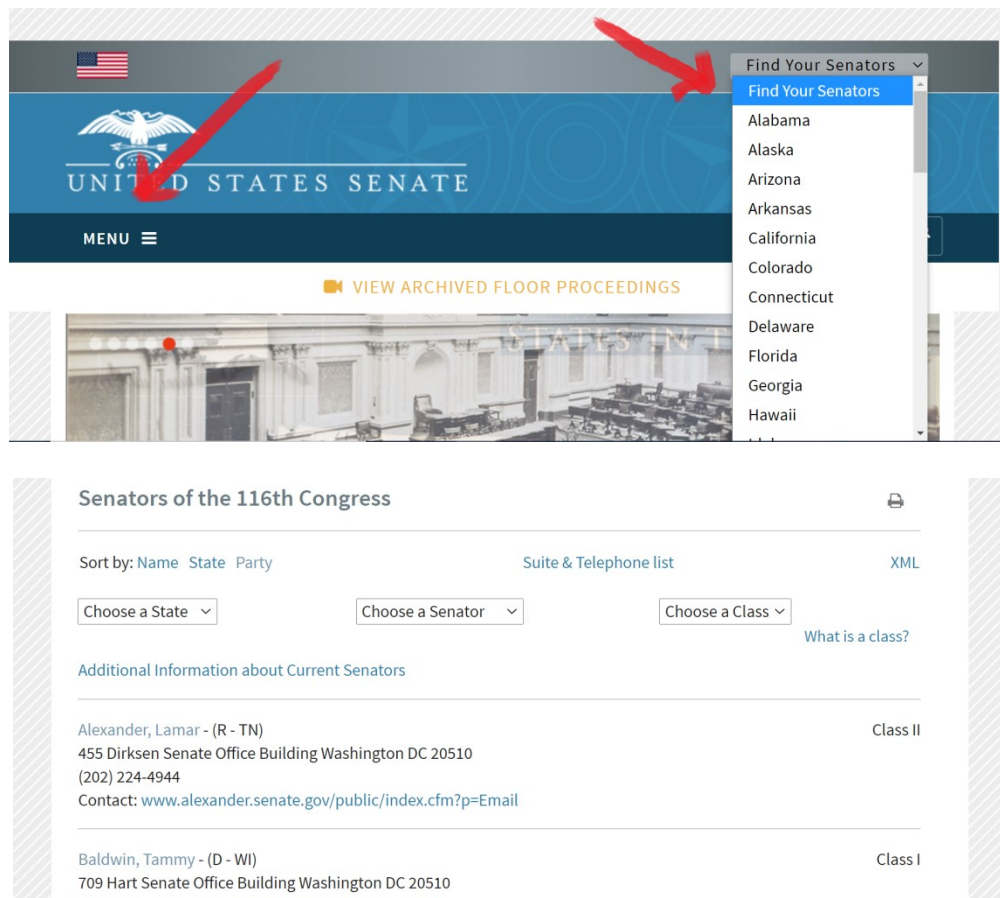
Federal Legislative Lobbying Tips

Opportunities to lobby US Senators and Representatives are available to everyone and do not require traveling to Washington, DC. Legislators maintain local offices and local meetings may actually be preferable because the Member is usually busier when in Washington. (When Covid-19 restrictions are in effect, you can schedule online meetings.) Party affiliation is also not an impediment to scheduling a meeting. For example, if you are a Democrat, but have a Republican senator, that individual still represents you and must hear your concerns as a constituent. What you are unlikely to be able to do is to meet directly with the Member. Instead, you will meet with his or her staffers.

Scheduling a Meeting

Senators

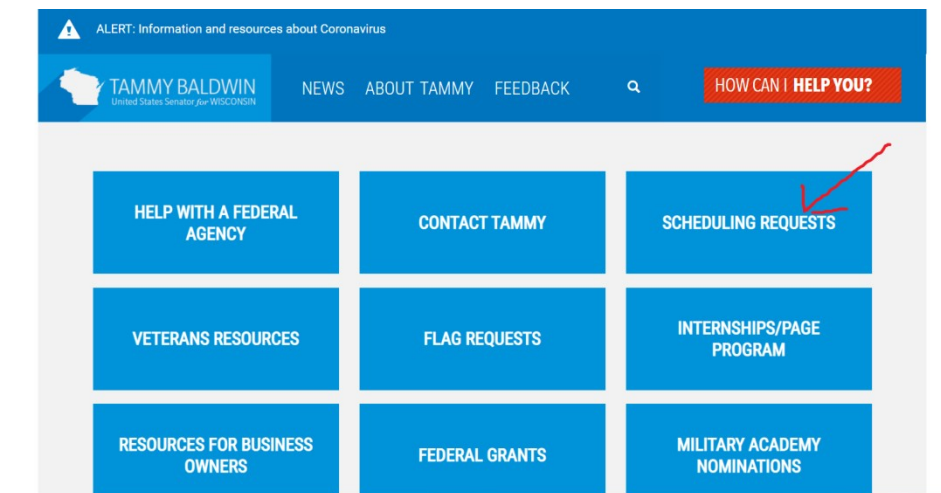
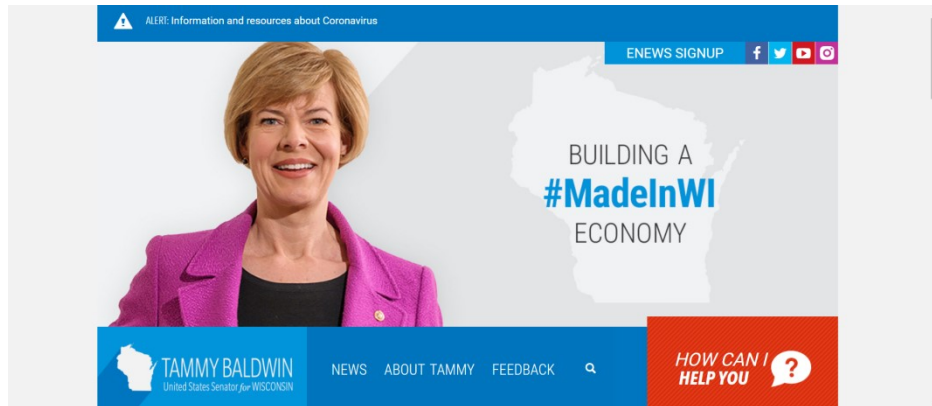
Begin your search for contact information for your senator online at senate.gov. At the top right, you can click on “Find Your Senators” to select your state (right arrow on image below). Or, you can click on the hamburger menu (left arrow on image below), select “Senators,” then “Contact,” to find your Senator by name. [Images below were taken from a PC. The screen is slightly different on a Mac.]



The image shows two screenshots from the United States Senate website. The top screenshot displays the website's header with the United States Senate logo and a navigation menu. A red arrow points to the 'Find Your Senators' dropdown menu, which is open and shows a list of states including Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, and Hawaii. Another red arrow points to the hamburger menu icon. The bottom screenshot shows the 'Senators of the 116th Congress' search results page. It features a search interface with dropdown menus for 'Choose a State', 'Choose a Senator', and 'Choose a Class'. Below the search interface, there is a table of senators with their names, party affiliations, and contact information.

Senators of the 116th Congress	
Sort by: Name	State Party
Alexander, Lamar - (R - TN)	Class II
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building Washington DC 20510	
(202) 224-4944	
Contact: www.alexander.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?p=Email	
Baldwin, Tammy - (D - WI)	Class I
709 Hart Senate Office Building Washington DC 20510	
(202) 224-5555	

From here, senators have organized their pages idiosyncratically. However, they all include addresses for their local offices and links for requesting meetings. Let's look at two examples. Senator Tammy Baldwin's page has a red box labeled "How Can I Help You?" Clicking on that button takes you to a page where you can select a button labeled "Scheduling Requests."



After clicking on "Scheduling Requests," you will get a prompt asking whether you want a Washington or a Wisconsin meeting. Clicking one of these options will bring up a form to fill out to schedule your meeting.

Schedule A Meeting
Schedule An Event
Schedule A Site Visit

Schedule a Meeting in Wisconsin

Your Information

First Name* Last Name*

Organization*

Street Address* Street Address (2)

City* State* WI Zip*

County*

Email* Verify Email*

Phone Number* Day-Of Contact Phone Number*

Meeting Information

First Date Available* Last Date Available*

Preferred Start Time* Preferred End Time*

What Legislative Topics Would You Like To Address?

Senator Lamar Alexander’s page has a “contact” button, and an email address for scheduling meetings, but no form.



Scheduling Requests - DC Office



455 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Please fax all D.C. and out-of-state scheduling requests to (202) 228-3398 or email scheduling@alexander.senate.gov
Washington, DC 20510
Fax: (202) 228-3398

Scheduling Requests - Tennessee Office



3322 West End Avenue, #120
Please fax all Tennessee scheduling requests to (615) 269-4803 or email tnscheduling@alexander.senate.gov
Nashville, TN 37203
Fax: (615) 269-4803

Insiders have advised us to contact both the scheduler, and the staffer who handles your issue, when asking for a meeting. The procedure is to cold call the Senator's office and ask for the name of the staffer who handles your issue (e.g. women's issues, judicial issues, etc.) The office will not give out the email address of the staffer, but will give the staffer's name and confirm the spelling. The format for senate staffer emails is usually firstname_lastname@senatorslastname.senate.gov. Now you have the two emails – the scheduler (from the website) and the staffer - that you need to make your request.

Representatives

Follow a similar procedure for locating contact information for your Representative. Start at house.gov. From there, you can search through a directory (left arrow in image below) or by zip code (right arrow in image below.)



After finding your Representative, look for contact information and meeting request links. The format for House staffer email addresses is usually firstname.lastname@mail.house.gov

Composing Your Request

Your request should be brief, but include some essential information. First, identify your connection with the Member. Ideally, a constituent should request the meeting. If you are not a current constituent, mention any other connection. Did you previously live there? Did you go to college there? Do you have relatives who live there? Second, if you are requesting the meeting for a group, identify the group you are representing.

Third, indicate, in general terms, the issue you wish to discuss. Insiders tell us that it is best not to signal opposition to transgenderism to Democratic lawmakers. For example, if you are lobbying against some provisions in the Equality Act, simply say that you want to discuss the Equality Act, or even just women's rights. Otherwise, most Democrats will assume your organization is conservative or homophobic and that they do not need to entertain your concerns.

Finally, indicate a window of time you are available for a meeting. If you don't hear back in a couple of weeks, follow up once or twice. Here is a template for a meeting request:

To: Scheduler, Legislative Staffer

Subject: Meeting Request re the Equality Act

Hello,

My name is ___ and I live in ___ town in your state.

I'm a volunteer with the [your activist group – or skip this if you are an individual], and I am looking to schedule a meeting with [Rep./Sen. ____], or a legislative staffer, to discuss the Equality Act. I am available during [these windows of time in the next few weeks] for a zoom or conference call.

Thank you,

Activist name

Preparing for Your Meeting

To make the most of your time with legislative staffers, do your homework on the legislator, gather your materials, and practice your pitch.

Research the Member

Spend a little time investigating the Member with whom you are meeting. What are her interests? Professional affiliations? Notable legislation? Is there somewhere you can find common ground? Using Senator Tammy Baldwin as an example again, we find that she is lesbian and that she, with several other senators, introduced the Women's Health Protection Act, intended to protect reproductive and abortion rights. If you are lobbying for amendments to the Equality Act, you could emphasize you and/or your group's commitment to expanding civil rights protections to lesbians and gays, and mention Baldwin's commitment to women's rights.

Understand that Members are often not subject matter experts on our issues. They have to legislate on a wide variety of topics and cannot be fully informed on all of them.

Insiders tell us that most Democrats view themselves as supporters of protections for women, and for trans-identified persons, but are frequently uninformed about the conflict of rights between these two groups. Therefore, a productive stance may be one of presenting our concerns as new information that will help the staffer achieve their boss's goal of protecting all of these groups, rather than simple opposition to a piece of legislation.

To that end, you will want to prepare a packet of information for your legislator, including articles, statistics, and studies about your issue, as well as a one-pager that specifically and concisely describes your concerns about the legislation under discussion. The packet doesn't need to be comprehensive! Just pick out a few that best support your specific concerns with the Equality Act.

Our Issues page [usequalityact-women.com/services] and the LBG Alliance-USA factsheet on the Equality Act [<https://lgballianceusa.substack.com/p/fact-sheet-on-sex-based-rights-and>] provide many talking points and supporting articles that you can draw upon for your one-pager or letters. We especially recommend our *Legal Analysis and Necessary Revisions* [<https://usequalityact-women.com/in-depth-analysis>] paper. It is a concise description of who the legislation is meant to protect, how it fails, and how it may be remedied.

You should also prepare a set of three major talking points that you want to drive home. You can have sub-points, and use examples to illustrate the problem, but stick to your three major points as much as you can. Examples and stories that highlight local concerns are especially helpful.

Finally, practice your pitch! You don't want to memorize a set piece, but you will want to be familiar enough with your material that you don't get forget what you wanted to say should you become nervous or thrown off balance by unexpected questions from the staffer. Be sure to time yourself when practicing. You are likely to get 20 minutes or less with a staffer; just 10 or less if meeting with the Member.

Managing Your Meeting

If you are an individual, obviously, you can skip the "roles" listed immediately below. This format is typical, however, for lobbying groups. Ideally, you will have at least 4 people in your lobbying group to fulfill four major roles:

- *Meeting Leader*. The leader's role is to keep everyone on track and on time. The leader also initiates introductions and presents the staffer with the packet of information and one-pager.
- *Pitch maker*. The pitch maker's role is to give an overview of the issue and drive home the three major talking points. The pitch maker should remain factual and not demonize anyone.
- *Storyteller*. The storyteller humanizes the issue with a personal story about how the issue has affected her. Ideally, the storyteller is a constituent and the story is a local one.

- *Note-taker.* The note-taker's role is obviously to take notes, with special attention to questions the staffer may ask that need following up and actions she may promise.

For individuals and groups, it is important to end your meeting with a specific "ask;" something you want the lawmaker to do. Specific text to amend a bill, for example, is preferable to simple opposition. The "ask" can also be more broad, perhaps something like asking for the Member to work with a specific caucus, or group of legislators, to support changes to a piece of legislation.

End the meeting by thanking staffers for their time, exchanging contact information, and assuring them you will follow up if there were questions they asked that you were unable to adequately address.

Post Meeting Protocols

After the meeting, everyone who took part should send thank-you notes to staffers, preferably hand-written. Make sure you follow up with any information you promised to provide, and on any actions they may have promised.

Go forth confidently knowing that your legislators work for you and are required to hear your concerns, and that you are the subject matter expert on this topic!