

AN ADVOCATES' GUIDE TO THE ROPES

How to speak to your legislators during session

1. KNOW WHEN TO VISIT THE CAPITOL

- Legislators are most accessible during the legislative session, which typically runs from January to April.
- Morning hours, especially when the House or Senate is in session, are the best times to catch legislators at the ropes.

GCDD hosts three Advocacy Days each spring.



2. COME PREPARED

- Bring a photo ID for security check-in at the Capitol.
- Know your legislator's name and the chamber they belong to (House or Senate). If you're unsure, you can find this information on pluralpolicy.com/find-your-legislator/.
- Have a clear and concise message or request ready to share with the legislator.

During Advocacy Days, GCDD sets a theme and will provide you with one-pagers that include facts and information on that topic.

3. NAVIGATE TO THE CHAMBER ROPES

- Once you've cleared security, go to the chamber where your legislator works:
 - House of Representatives: 3rd floor of the Capitol.
 - Senate: 3rd floor, opposite side of the building from the House.
- On the Senate side, look for the table near the ropes area where you can request a form to speak with your legislator; on the House side, the table is located on the 4th floor, directly above the ropes.

During Advocacy Days, GCDD 'team leads' will escort you to the ropes in small groups.





4. FILL OUT A REQUEST FORM

- At the table, ask for a request form to fill out.
- Write your name, the name of your legislator, and a brief reason for the meeting.
 - Example: "I'm here to share my thoughts on House Bill 123 regarding waivers."
- Hand the completed form to a 'page.' Pages are responsible for delivering your request to the legislator inside the chamber.

During Advocacy Days, GCDD will prepare forms for you; however, we sometimes run out and you will need to prepare your own.

5. WAIT PATIENTLY

- The page will deliver your message to the legislator. This may take some time, especially if they are busy or debating on the floor.
- Stand near the ropes while you wait so you're ready when they come out.



6. SPEAK CLEARLY AND BRIEFLY

- When your legislator arrives, introduce yourself and thank them for taking the time to speak with you.
- Share your message or request in 1-2 minutes. Keep it concise and to the point.
 - Example: "Thank you for meeting me. I'm here to advocate for [issue] because [reason]."
- If you have materials to leave behind (like a fact sheet or one-pager), hand it to them at the end of your conversation.

During Advocacy Days, GCDD will give you a one-pager to share with your legislator.



TIPS FOR SUCCESS

BE POLITE:

Always approach with respect, even if you disagree with the legislator's position.

DRESS PROFESSIONALLY:

Business or business casual attire shows you're serious about your visit.

STAY CALM:

The Capitol can be hectic, but remaining patient goes a long way. If you need a break, you can always go back to GCDD's Advocacy Day headquarters.