



## Lobbying Meeting Talking Points U.S. Senate and Staff

**Summary:** The following talking points provide an outline of how you can share information with your U.S. Senators and staff during your lobbying meetings. While you have the freedom to personalize these talking points to fit your own situation and to emphasize different elements, they are grouped together thematically based on FARE’s legislative priorities and we would encourage you to follow the outline below. **Please try to arrive at your meeting between five to ten minutes early.**

Remember, there are two elements to every successful meeting – personalizing the issue and making the ask. The personalization comes at the beginning of the meeting when you help educate the member and staff about life-threatening food allergies and their impact on your family. As you move forward in the meeting and discuss different topics, you will then make specific asks related to that issue.

In many cases, your meetings with your two U.S. Senators and their staffs will be attended by more advocates than your House meeting and as a result, it is likely that not everyone will have an opportunity to speak. Please note on the “Advocacy Day” app, we have designated the state captain for each meeting who will lead the conversation, and **we would encourage you to discuss on Monday evening who will be saying what and when, and to arrive at your Senate meetings 10 minutes in advance to confirm speaking roles.** Since there are two Senate meetings for each state, one easy way to ensure that more individuals have the opportunity to talk is to divvy up the talking points below so that five or six individuals talk in one meeting and another five or six individuals talk in the next. If you decide to go in this direction, just make sure that each new speaker briefly shares their name and where they are from before discussing the next talking point.

Lastly, the talking points provide a brief summary of each issue. You can learn more about each topic in your folder. We appreciate your help and if you have any questions about these issues, please reach out to Joe Kalmin ([JKalmin@foodallergy.org](mailto:JKalmin@foodallergy.org)) or Jason Linde ([JLinde@foodallergy.org](mailto:JLinde@foodallergy.org)). Thank you!

**Note:** Topics are highlighted in bold followed by sample language with each ask being underlined.

- **Introduction** – “Hi, I am (your name) from (town) and joining me today are food allergy advocates from across our state to discuss ways that you can help support the approximately 10% of our state’s population that like me (or my child) have life-threatening food allergies.”
- **FARE** – “I/We am/are here as part of FARE’s (Food Allergy Research & Education) fly-in. FARE is the nation’s leading non-profit engaged in food allergy advocacy as well as the largest private funder of food allergy research.”
- **Scope of the Problem/Personal Story** – “There are more than 33 million Americans with life-threatening food allergies which means that the concerns I am sharing with you today are felt by roughly 10% of your constituents. A food allergic reaction sends someone to the emergency room every three minutes, food allergies cost the American economy more than \$25 billion a year, and the average family spends more than \$4,000 a

year in extra costs for each food allergic child. For me, the best way I can help you understand the challenge I/we face is (briefly tell a personal story).”

- **Making Schools Safer and Protecting Vulnerable Children** – “Our top legislative priority this year is making sure that school cafeteria workers are trained in proper food preparation for the nearly six million children with life-threatening food allergies which translates to about two children in every classroom. Earlier this year, Senators Durbin and Duckworth introduced, S. 121, [Protecting Children with Food Allergies Act](#) a bill requiring school food service employees to have the training they need to avoid food allergy reactions and what to do when one occurs.

Senator Durbin’s legislation also provides additional educational materials on food allergies to front-line WIC workers to help their clients recognize and take steps to prevent their babies from having food allergies later on in life. As you may know, the [2020-25 U.S. Dietary Guidelines](#) call for the early introduction of known allergens as a way to prevent food allergies from emerging later on in life. The National WIC Association has endorsed this legislation and for these reasons, **we would like you (or your boss) to cosponsor S. 121** and I have a copy of the bill to share with you.”

- **Appropriations** – “We are making three appropriations requests this year and FARE will be formally submitting them to Senate offices on our behalf. The first is that we would like to increase the amount of money spent on food allergy research at the NIH at NIAID’s Consortium of Food Allergy Research or CoFAR. Second, we would like to continue the funding of CDC’s Healthy Schools program and its school-based efforts to address food allergies and reduce potentially anaphylactic reactions. This is especially important as an NIH study found that 25% of all anaphylactic attacks occurred in children with “no known food allergies.” Lastly, we ask the USDA to prioritize the early introduction of food allergens in the WIC food package as a way to curtail the rise of food allergies in the most economically vulnerable of Americans. **We would like you (or your boss) to support and vote for these appropriations requests.**
- **Labeling Medicine** – “Our last ask involves labeling medicine. For people with life-threatening food allergies, we rely on avoidance and food labels to keep us safe. Unfortunately, the very medicine that many people including doctors rely on to treat people with allergies like the steroid prednisone (PRED-neh-ZONE) or popular over the counter medicines like Benadryl and Claritin, contain lactose which is a dairy product. One recent study found that 93% of all medications contain potential allergens. Tragically, in 2019, an 11-year-old girl died because of using a prescription toothpaste that had dairy in it.

Thankfully, Congressman Dean Phillips of Minnesota is getting ready to introduce the ADINA Act, named after one of his constituents, that would require the labeling of prescription and the over-the-counter medicine to include the top-nine allergens and gluten. **We would like you to introduce this bill in the Senate or cosponsor it after its introduction.** Here is a copy of that bill.”

- **Questions/Thank you** – “We are so grateful for your time today and your past support. Do you have any questions for us? Also, we will be more than happy to follow-up with you on these asks in the near future and for those that did not talk during our meeting today, FARE will be sending you letters sharing our interest on these legislative issues. Thank you.”