



Lobbying Meeting Talking Points U.S. House of Representatives and Staff

Summary: The following talking points provide an outline of how you can share information with your member of the U.S. House of Representatives 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.

It is possible, especially with the House meetings, that you may run out of time before you can make all of your asks and we have made the last ask optional for that reason. There will be some instances where constituents will be grouped with non-constituents. In this case, please ensure that the constituent(s) have an opportunity to speak before those who live outside of the congressional district.

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) or Jason Linde (JLinde@foodallergy.org). Thank you!

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

- **Introduction** – “Hi, I am (your name) from (town). Joining me today are food allergy advocates from across our state to discuss ways you can help support the more than 70,000 of your constituents who 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).”
- **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 cosponsor this bill and I have a copy of this legislation to share with you.**

- **Joining the Congressional Food Allergy Research Caucus** – “Two years ago, we started the bipartisan Congressional Food Allergy Research Caucus cochaired by Rep. Patrick McHenry of North Carolina and Rep. Doris Matsui of California and it currently has 17 members. FARE helped start the Caucus because while there are more than 33 million Americans with food allergies, NIH only spends 24 cents per US resident of its total budget on food allergies. And unfortunately, there is only one FDA-approved treatment for food allergies, and it is for children ages 4-17 allergic to peanuts. We know with more research we can find and fund new treatments and a cure. And, unlike other Caucuses, there is no cost to join and the time commitment for staff is minimal. **Will you (or your boss) please join the Caucus?**
- **Appropriations** – “I/We have two more quick asks to make. The first is about appropriations. FARE worked with Rep. Khanna’s office and Rep. Matsui’s office to submit three appropriations requests that would increase the amount of money spent on food allergy research at NIH, provide CDC with additional money as part of its Healthy Schools program to assist children with food allergies, and asks 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 and I have copies to share with you.** If your office did accept appropriations requests, FARE would have submitted them already.”
- **(Only if you have time) Making Schools Safer and Protecting Vulnerable Children** – “Our last concern is making sure that our 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 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 in life. The National WIC Association has endorsed this legislation and for these reasons, **we would like you (or your boss) to introduce or cosponsor this bill in the House** and I have a copy of the bill to share with you.”

- **Questions/Thank you** – “I/We are so grateful for your time today. Do you have any questions for me? Also, I/we will be more than happy to follow-up with you on these asks in the near future. Thank you.”