

# How to be “Heard” by your legislators

- Be clear about what you are asking them to do.
- Cite your research and support. Naming where your information comes from lets the legislator know that you are knowledgeable on the topic.
- Personalize your letter or message. This lets the legislator know that you are sincere and are representative of the community.
- Do not be argumentative, confrontational, or disrespectful. This will automatically discount your message.
- Include all your demographic data relative to being a constituent of theirs.

## How to find your senators and representatives

<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/>

## Advocacy Issues, sponsoring committee and links to petitions/letters

### Federal Issues:

1. Negotiating Settlement on the War in the Ukraine (Peace)- Support and pursue a negotiated peace in Ukraine and end to the death and destruction. Preliminary negotiations were held in Copenhagen in June 2023, and in Jeddah in August 4-5, 2023, supported by the United States. Ukraine has proposed a ten point proposal for ending the war. Please pursue peacemaking talks with Russia.
2. Reinstating US Farm Bill (Environmental Team of Justice& Facing Systemic Racism) - The Farm Bill (officially the Agricultural Improvement Act) is an enormous piece of legislation that is reauthorized every five years. This legislation began in 1933, as the Agricultural Adjustment Act. Its original focus was price control for certain crops, yet it has expanded over the decades to include a vast variety of topics including agricultural concerns, physical and mental health benefits for farmers, support for farmers of color, food and nutrition regulations, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and access to visas for migrant farmworkers. Signed into law in 2018, the current bill (H.R.2) authorized \$428 billion dollars of spending over the past five years, 80% of which pertains to SNAP and other nutrition programs. The current legislation expires at the end of September and it’s time to urge Congress to ensure that the funding continues to serve our communities. Click the link below to log in and send your message: <https://www.voterve.net/BroadcastLinks/u2MrYRdfGyt9DEYCnKx5NQ>
3. Department of Education – Stop Book Banning in School Libraries (Facing Systemic Racism)- There have been more than 1,477 book bans across the country, affecting at least 874 titles, this year alone. This is not even counting the wholesale shutdown of libraries by educators afraid of being fired or even jailed. Especially targeted are books about people of color and LGBTQ+ individuals, with intent to silence the voices of people that aren’t like them. And they are putting teeth in these laws, including criminal penalties for educators who are simply doing their jobs. Call on the Department of Education take action to protect the right to read and support public school teachers and librarians working hard to fight back. Please add your name now. <https://tinyurl.com/BlueFuture23>
4. FY24 – Funding Community Services(Neighbors)- Congress entered its August recess without finalizing the FY24 budget. This year there is an urgent threat to funding that helps community programs thrive. In the FY24 budget, community needs such as affordable housing, nutrition programs, health care,

education, and efforts to combat climate change are capped at FY22 levels. Benefits such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP), commonly referred to as food stamps, have already seen an 80% decrease in 2023 alone. It is time to tell Congress to not further cut these vital programs for our communities. Click the link below to log in and send your message:

<https://www.votervoice.net/BroadcastLinks/akhlenc6vH-fHQQTWzwhg>

### **Pennsylvania Issues:**

1. Fairness Act(Justice) – House Bill 300 would amend the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act to prohibit discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. May 2, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives passed an extension of the state’s anti-discrimination law to protect LGBTQ+ people 22 years after the bill was first introduced. This bill now moves on to the state senate for a vote. **Visit [action.pavalues.org](https://action.pavalues.org) to contact your senator and tell them to support the Fairness Act!**
2. Driving PA Forward(Justice)- This legislation will allow immigrants to show an IRS-issued tax ID number (ITIN) and/or a combination of documents proving their identity instead of a social security number, while other requirements remain the same. Sign the petition to support our work in getting our legislators to approve the law that allows Pennsylvania residents to obtain driver’s licenses regardless of their immigration status. Sign the petition here: <https://tinyurl.com/DPPPetition>
3. Stop book banning (Facing Systemic Racism)- As a growing number of states are enacting laws banning books from public schools and libraries, support Sen Amanda Cappelletti’s introduction of a bill that would ban schools and public libraries from banning books. Senator Cappelletti reports that "We are one of the worst states in book banning efforts now. We had 56 attempts to ban over 302 unique titles,". Cappelletti’s bill mirrors that of Illinois’s, the first to successfully pass in any US state. It would require libraries which receive state funding to include as part of their policies that they follow the American Library Association’s Bill of Rights or that they develop their own language around preserving the right to read for all.
4. Medical Debt Relief Act(Mission Board) - More than half of Pennsylvanians have struggled to pay for health care, with more than a million reporting medical debt already in collections, according to a 2021 study. House Bill 78 would intervene in that cycle, aiming to prevent medical debt before a patient ever receives a bill, using programs that already exist. The program would provide relief and reduce predatory practices by collection agencies. HB78 passed the House last month with bipartisan support. <https://pahealth.salsalabs.org/hb78/index.html?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=f9be13ea-6988-4131-ab20-32edecdd34a5>
5. Gun Control (Peace) – Work to pass the *Common Agenda to End Gun Violence*. This proposal, created by CeaseFirePA, includes four major legislative solutions: lost and stolen gun reporting, safe firearm storage, Extreme Risk Protection Orders, and universal background checks. Gun violence takes the lives or injures 4,600 Pennsylvanians every year. And there isn’t a single community in the state that is unaffected by this epidemic. The Common Agenda addresses each major source of this devastation by bringing together more than 130 organizations to advocate for solutions that will save lives. <https://act.ceasefirepa.org/a/common-agenda>