

## 2019 Guide for Ambassadors

### Legislator Invitation & Handler Instructions

#### DO'S & DON'TS of interacting with a legislator

##### Do

Greet them with their official title (e.g. Senator Blackburn).

Give them space and time to interact with attendees in an informal manner.

Give them time to speak and provide their staff with the included talking points if they are requested.

##### Don't

Share with them any frustrations you're having with event planners or volunteers.

Give them a gift valued over \$5.

Talk politics. Arthritis knows no political party and we are a nonpartisan organization.

Worry! Members of Congress are generally polite and make a point to be sociable and approachable.

#### Important:

If the elected official is up for re-election, we must enforce the following protocol:

- 1) The elected official must not use this event as a campaign opportunity. **They cannot talk about their re-election campaign during their speech.**

## YOUR LEGISLATOR SAID YES

Great news! An elected official has agreed to attend your Walk to Cure Arthritis. When a member of Congress or locally elected official shows up, everyone wins:

- **Your Walk to Cure Arthritis** receives publicity and is positioned as an important community event.
- **Arthritis Foundation advocacy staff and volunteers** strengthen their ongoing relationship with the member of Congress. Building allies on Capitol Hill and in state legislatures allows us to increase research funding and improve access to care for people with arthritis.
- **The elected official** has the opportunity to address an audience of his/her constituents in a positive atmosphere. We have legislator talking points below they can use to prepare.

To prepare for the arrival of an elected official you will need to identify and locate the following items:

- **A handler.** Ideally, a local Arthritis Ambassador or mission staff person.
- **A photographer.** No need to pay a professional, but a volunteer who is willing to snap a few photos of the official speaking, interacting with participants, and meeting with volunteers is helpful.
- **Time.** The official will want to address the audience. Be prepared to be flexible the day of the event to accommodate the official's schedule and ensure that they have an opportunity to speak. They will have no more than 5-7 minutes in order to keep the overall program on time.
- **A thank you card.** Place the thank you card either in the mission booth or at registration and have participants sign. If you have a large event, you may consider a jumbo card, which can be delivered to the local congressional office after the event or mailed to the Arthritis Foundation's Washington, DC office for hand-delivery to Capitol Hill.
- Finally, **read** through this document to ensure that you're prepared and know what to expect.

**Why invite your elected officials even if they are likely to not attend?** It's another touch point in forming a relationship with their office.



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# SAMPLE INVITATION LETTER

The Honorable (full name)  
(Room #) (Name) House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Honorable (Last Name),

On behalf of the Arthritis Foundation, I would like to invite you and your staff to join us for the 2019 Walk to Cure Arthritis. This event draws hundreds of local residents and will be held on (date), at (location) and the event will start promptly at (time). Should you be able to attend we would like you to deliver a few remarks. I hope that you will be able to join us.

The Walk to Cure Arthritis is an annual community walk that rallies the arthritis community and raises funds to find a cure for arthritis, the leading cause of disability in the United States. We are asking each participant to commit to the 5K. Every step counts and every dollar matters! As you know, there are more than (xxxxx) adults afflicted with some form of arthritis in our state.

Thank you for considering our request. If you have any questions or concerns do not hesitate to contact (name of walk coordinator), (name of city) Walk Coordinator at (add phone number). We look forward to working with you and your office. Hope to see you (add date)!

Thank you,

[your name]  
[your address]  
[your phone and email]

## HANDLER GUIDE

### As the legislator's handler, you'll want to take the following steps:

- Connect with the local legislative office prior to the event. Make sure you know when to expect the Member's arrival. Arrange an onsite meeting location. Share with your Member relevant state-specific arthritis data.
- Google the Member! You want to know who you're looking for! When you meet them, offer a bottle of water.
- Check the [Arthritis Foundation advocacy website](#) to see if your legislator is a member of the [Arthritis Caucus](#) or a cosponsor of any important arthritis-related legislation. Be sure to thank him/her for supporting people with arthritis.
- Determine which staff and volunteers you want to introduce the Member to prior to the event. Make sure that those being introduced are aware that the legislator is attending



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the event and that they know how to address them properly: Representative [Last Name]. Typically, this list includes honorees, the event staff, and any prominent advocacy volunteers.

- After your introductions, give the Member time to interact with other event participants. Keep an eye on them, without hovering.
- Usher the Member to the stage when it is their turn to speak. Greet them after completing their speech and thank them for their time. Typically, at this point, the legislator will depart.

If you have any questions, contact your [State Director of Advocacy](#) and Julie Eller at [jeller@arthritis.org](mailto:jeller@arthritis.org) or (202) 843-0094.

# LEGISLATOR TALKING POINTS

Arthritis impacts over 54 million Americans and 300,000 of our nation's children.

Over XXXX of people living in [State] are living with arthritis.

Arthritis is our nation's leading cause of disability, costing our economy \$304 billion in direct and indirect medical expenses each year.

We can't afford to ignore arthritis.

That's why I'm doing my part by:

- **Supporting patient centered step therapy reform by supporting federal legislation that addresses this barrier to care.** Last Congress, the legislation known as the Restoring the Patient's Voice Act, H.R. 2077, was introduced by Reps. Brad Wenstrup (R-OH) and Raul Ruiz (D-CA) – who encountered step therapy in their own practice of medicine and had eighty-eight bipartisan co-sponsors calling for reform. Once re-introduced to this Congress, I pledge to support the new bill with my sponsorship.
- **Joining the Congressional Arthritis Caucus.** I am pleased to serve on the bicameral Congressional Arthritis Caucus and work with nearly 130 of my colleagues to raise awareness about arthritis, and these important legislative issues, on Capitol Hill.

Thanks for being here and doing your part, too.

By participating in the Arthritis Foundation's Walk to Cure Arthritis, you become a champion to fight for a cure. The Arthritis Foundation is the largest national nonprofit organization that supports the more than 100 types of arthritis and related conditions.

I thank you for the chance to join you in the fight to find a cure for arthritis.

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# ARTHRITIS PREVALENCE BY STATE

2015 state specific estimates of arthritis prevalence (number and percent)

Date Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## Arthritis and Work Limitations, by State

Prevalence of arthritis<sup>1</sup> and work limitations<sup>2</sup> among adults with arthritis, by state, BRFSS<sup>3</sup>, 2017

State	Estimated number with arthritis	Age-adjusted* % with arthritis	Age-adjusted % of work limitations among adults with arthritis	State	Estimated number with arthritis	Age-adjusted* % with arthritis	Age-adjusted % of work limitations among adults with arthritis
Alabama	1,256,000	30.3	52.8	Montana	211,000	22.7	47.7
Alaska	125,000	22.7	38.2	Nebraska	347,000	21.9	37.3
Arizona	1,310,000	21.9	42.6	Nevada	468,000	18.5	35.7
Arkansas	705,000	28.3	55.2	New Hampshire	286,000	22.8	38.9
California	5,902,000	18.3	40.5	New Jersey	1,593,000	20.3	44.4
Colorado	930,000	20.2	41.8	New Mexico	402,000	23.0	49.7
Connecticut	653,000	20.1	37.4	New York	3,510,000	20.4	40.9
Delaware	191,000	22.2	45.0	North Carolina	1,941,000	22.1	53.2
District of Columbia	81,000	15.6	43.9	North Dakota	142,000	23.2	38.3
Florida	4,163,000	20.5	50.0	Ohio	2,616,000	25.9	42.7
Georgia	1,752,000	20.9	37.2	Oklahoma	817,000	25.8	44.0
Hawaii	236,000	19.0	36.8	Oregon	866,000	23.8	44.2
Idaho	309,000	22.2	39.2	Pennsylvania	2,943,000	25.3	37.4
Illinois	2,411,000	22.4	37.8	Rhode Island	232,000	24.6	47.6
Indiana	1,445,000	26.1	46.2	South Carolina	1,101,000	25.0	44.2
Iowa	596,000	22.0	41.1	South Dakota	146,000	20.0	47.6
Kansas	527,000	22.2	41.8	Tennessee	1,568,000	27.3	50.4
Kentucky	1,110,000	29.6	52.7	Texas	4,507,000	20.8	48.0
Louisiana	978,000	25.5	52.2	Utah	421,000	20.2	35.9
Maine	337,000	26.5	38.7	Vermont	140,000	23.7	40.0
Maryland	1,167,000	22.7	39.3	Virginia	1,644,000	23.0	40.0
Massachusetts	1,302,000	21.5	36.3	Washington	1,378,000	22.2	43.3
Michigan	2,363,000	27.1	43.4	West Virginia	565,000	34.4	54.3
Minnesota	841,000	17.8	38.5	Wisconsin	1,147,000	22.8	43.6
Mississippi	662,000	27.0	49.9	Wyoming	113,000	23.3	40.0
Missouri	1,314,000	24.9	44.4	50 States+DC <sup>5</sup>		22.7	42.7