



# TAKE DOWN TOBACCO NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION

## ACTIVITY: Contact Your Legislator

*Use your voice to inform decision-makers and advocate for tobacco-free policies*

### OVERVIEW

Pick a policy issue and contact your legislators (local, state, or federal) asking them to support or oppose a policy, or educate them on what your local group is doing on the issue. Make sure your elected officials hear your voice! Decision-makers rely on constituent feedback to understand community priorities."

To learn about active campaigns in your state, visit [takedowntobacco.org/key-issues](https://takedowntobacco.org/key-issues) (Advocacy Action Map) or contact us at [dayofaction@tobaccofreekids.org](mailto:dayofaction@tobaccofreekids.org).

| TIME NEEDED                        | GROUP SIZE                        | SKILL LEVEL                 | IMPACT                                 |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 1-3 hours prep<br>15-30 min action | Individual or<br>1-4 for meetings | Beginner to<br>Intermediate | High impact<br>Direct policy influence |

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Fact sheets and resources about your policy issue (visit [takedowntobacco.org/resources](https://takedowntobacco.org/resources))
- Key fact sheets from your state on youth tobacco use, flavored products, and CDC/FDA funding needs
- Contact information for your legislators (see links below)
- Your personal story about why tobacco control matters to you
- Talking points and call/email scripts (templates included below)
- Leave-behind folder with materials (for in-person meetings)
- Phone, computer, or transportation for your chosen contact method

### WAYS TO COMMUNICATE WITH DECISION-MAKERS

| METHOD                    | BEST FOR  | TIPS   |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Phone Calls</b>        | Quick, high-volume outreach; urgent issues; showing constituent support | Usually taken by staff. Keep it brief (1-2 minutes). Have your script ready. |
| <b>Email/Letters</b>      | Detailed information; documented record; sharing personal stories       | Keep to one page (500 words max). Spell their name correctly. Be respectful. |
| <b>In-Person Meetings</b> | Building relationships; complex issues; making a strong impression      | Limit to 4 people. Bring materials. Get a photo. Send thank-you after.       |
| <b>Public Testimony</b>   | Speaking at hearings, town halls, council meetings; public record       | Time usually limited (2-5 min). Practice timing. Arrive early to sign up.    |
| <b>Social Media</b>       | Public visibility; engaging others; amplifying your message             | Tag legislators directly. Use #TakeDownTobacco. Share photos and videos.     |

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

### Step 1: Choose Your Issue

What change do you want to see? Current priority issues include:

- Ending the sale of all flavored tobacco products (including menthol and flavored nicotine pouches)
- Raising tobacco taxes to fund prevention and cessation programs
- Strengthening smoke-free and vape-free air policies
- Supporting CDC and FDA tobacco prevention funding
- Regulating tobacco marketing targeting youth on social media

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### Step 2: Power-Map Your Issue

Identify who has power over your issue and where they stand:

- **Allies:** Who already supports your cause? How can you keep them engaged?
- **Opponents:** Who opposes you? Is there information that might change their mind?
- **Undecided:** Who hasn't taken a position? What would help them support you?

### Step 3: Research Your Decision-Makers

Learn about each legislator before contacting them:

- What committees do they serve on? (Health, education, finance?)
- Have they voted on tobacco issues before? What was their position?
- What issues do they care about most? (Economic development? Children's health?)
- Do they have personal connections to tobacco issues?

### Step 4: Create Your Story-Plan

Build a compelling message tailored to each decision-maker:

1. **Key Message:** What's the most credible, impactful point for this person?
2. **Supporting Facts:** 1-2 data points that back up your message
3. **Your Personal Story:** How has tobacco affected your community, school, or peers?
4. **The Ask:** What specific action do you want them to take?

### Step 5: Prepare Your Materials

- Write your call script or talking points (see templates below)
- Gather and print key fact sheets for your state on youth tobacco use, flavored products, and CDC/FDA funding needs from the Take Down Tobacco [Day of Action Resources page](#)
- For meetings: Create a leave-behind folder with your group's info and a way to contact you
- Reach out to your local coalition or health department for expert training on your issue
- Practice! It's crucial to feel confident before your call or meeting

### Step 6: Scheduling a Meeting

If your group will be meeting with your legislator in person:

- Call your legislator's office to schedule a meeting anytime between now and the Take Down Tobacco National Day of Action (April 1)
- Provide your address to prove you live in their district
- Tell them what the meeting is about, and what school or group you are from
- Decide who will go with you (a parent, teacher, or other adult) and outline what you're going to say
- Limit meetings to four participants and recruit constituents from the official's district.
- Have participants develop their story about why they care. Legislators are most interested in what youth are experiencing every day

## DURING THE ACTIVITY

### For Phone Calls

- Make it a Call Party! Gather your group, have snacks, and call together
- Do a pre-calling huddle to practice and build confidence
- Use your script but let your personality shine through
- Celebrate after – calling takes courage!

### For In-Person Meetings

- Arrive early and dress professionally
- Introduce yourselves and thank them for their time
- Use your materials and visuals to explain your cause
- Summarize your key points and make your specific ask
- If they ask questions you can't answer, write them down for follow-up
- Get a photo at the end of the meeting!

### For Public Testimony

- Arrive early to sign in and get a good seat
- Listen to other speakers and reference good points made
- Introduce yourself clearly: name, school/organization, and city
- Stick to your time limit (usually 2-5 minutes)
- Speak confidently – you know your community!

## AFTER THE ACTIVITY

- **Send a thank-you** note, email, or social media message within 24-48 hours
- **Follow up** on any questions they asked or information they requested
- **Share on social media** – tag the legislator and use #TakeDownTobacco
- **Invite them** to an upcoming event or to visit your school/organization
- **Stay in contact** and hold them accountable for their commitments
- **Report your activity** at [takedowntobacco.org](http://takedowntobacco.org) to get on our national map!

## MEETING WITH DECISION-MAKERS CHECKLIST

### Logistics

- Research how to schedule a meeting with your representative
- Request a meeting (be flexible with timing) & provide your address to confirm you live in the district.
- Confirm who will be attending the meeting
- Confirm the location and time of the meeting
- Plan to arrive early
- Dress professionally

### Preparing for the Meeting

- Do your homework: What does this decision-maker care about?
- Know your purpose: Are you meeting to educate/inform or to make a specific policy ask?
- Reach out to your local coalition or health department for expert training
- Identify other community groups that support your cause
- Practice your key message and personal story
- Prepare your materials and leave-behind folder
- Print key fact sheets on youth tobacco use, flavored products, and CDC/FDA funding

## During the Meeting

- Introduce yourselves and state your purpose
- Use your materials and visuals to explain your cause
- Share your personal story – why does this matter to you?
- Summarize your key points and make your specific ask
- Write down any questions they ask for follow-up
- Thank them for their time
- Get a photo!

## After the Meeting

- Send a thank-you email, card, or social media post
- Follow up on any questions or requests
- Invite them to an upcoming event
- Stay in contact and hold them accountable
- Share photos on social media with #TakeDownTobacco

## TEMPLATES & SCRIPTS

### PHONE CALL SCRIPT

*"Hi, my name is [YOUR NAME] and I am a youth constituent living in [CITY/TOWN]. I am calling to urge [LEGISLATOR] to support measures that would end the sale of flavored tobacco products. Over 1.6 million kids still use e-cigarettes, and nearly 90% of them use flavored products. I am sick of my generation being targeted by Big Tobacco with sweet, fruity, and minty flavors. At my school, [INSERT HOW VAPING/TOBACCO HAS IMPACTED YOUR SCHOOL OR COMMUNITY]. Please protect kids in our district by ending the sale of all flavored tobacco products. Thank you for your time."*

### EMAIL/LETTER TEMPLATE

Dear [FULL NAME OF LEGISLATOR],

My name is [YOUR NAME] and I am a [GRADE/YEAR] at [SCHOOL NAME] in [CITY/TOWN].

I am writing to urge you to support [SPECIFIC POLICY OR ACTION]. Youth tobacco use remains a serious public health problem. Over 1.6 million kids use e-cigarettes, and nicotine pouch use among high school seniors has more than tripled from 1.4% in 2023 to 4.4% in 2025.

**[INSERT YOUR PERSONAL STORY – How has tobacco/vaping affected your school or community?]**

Please consider [SPECIFIC ACTION YOU WANT THEM TO TAKE] to protect kids in our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

## KEY FACTS TO USE

### YOUTH E-CIGARETTE USE

- Over 1.6 million kids use e-cigarettes (2024 NYTS)
- Nearly 90% of youth e-cigarette users use flavored products
- 430,000 middle and high school students vape every single day
- Today's e-cigarettes can contain as much nicotine as 200 cigarettes

### NICOTINE POUCHES

- Nicotine pouch use among high school seniors increased from 1.4% in 2023 to 4.4% in 2025
- Sales nearly tripled from \$145 million to \$404 million between January 2023 and December 2024
- 360,000 high school students currently use nicotine pouches

### FLAVORED PRODUCTS

- Over 80% of e-cigarette sales are for flavored products
- Flavors mask harshness and make it easier for kids to start using tobacco
- Research shows flavor restrictions reduce youth tobacco use without increasing cigarette smoking

*Find more state-specific facts at [tobaccofreekids.org/facts\\_issues/fact\\_sheets](https://tobaccofreekids.org/facts_issues/fact_sheets)*

## FIND YOUR LEGISLATORS

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>FEDERAL</b><br><b>U.S. Senator:</b> senate.gov<br><b>U.S. Representative:</b> house.gov | <b>STATE</b><br>Search "[Your State] legislature find my representative"  |
| <b>LOCAL</b><br>Visit your city or county government website                               | <b>NEED HELP?</b><br>Contact <a href="mailto:dayofaction@tobaccofreekids.org">dayofaction@tobaccofreekids.org</a> |

One voice takes courage. Two voices create partnership.  
Three voices become a movement. Hundreds of voices ignite change.

[takedowntobacco.org](https://takedowntobacco.org) | [#TakeDownTobacco](https://twitter.com/TakeDownTobacco) | [dayofaction@tobaccofreekids.org](mailto:dayofaction@tobaccofreekids.org)