

# **#KeepMarching**

**MomsRising Advocacy  
and Organizing Tactics  
and Tips**

**MomsRising.org  
MamásConPoder.org**

# #KeepMarching

## MomsRising Advocacy and Organizing Tactics and Tips

At MomsRising, we know the voices of moms and the people who love them are powerful. We've seen it in numerous wins over the last 10 years, from the local and state levels all the way up to Congress and the White House. Now all our voices are needed more than ever to protect families, stand up against bigotry and discrimination, and continue to lead the way to the kind of policies that lift our families, fuel our economy, and build a nation where everyone can thrive.

MomsRising members across the country are flexing our grassroots muscles, and together we are a powerful force. Whether you're focused on the Administration, Congress, your state legislature, your local city council or other target, here are a few tips and tactics proven to maximize your impact that you can mix and match to put to good use.

- 1 Find a local or national organization to work with you (like MomsRising!) that shares your values. There's a lot to do, and it's often easiest to do it with a group of people and/or an organization supporting you.**

*Note: MomsRising is a member service organization, so we do all the hard work for you in terms of finding the top issues when you can make your voice heard and have an impact – and bringing them to you with easy ways to take action. When you are signed on with MomsRising (it's free!), every week we deliver at least three possible actions directly to you that you can do. With each action, you can choose if you have time (and inclination) to do it or not, your choice. We are at your service!*

- 2 Welcome your friends to take action with you. Start a #KeepMarching Circle with MomsRising. Sign up here to let us know you're starting a #KeepMarching Circle:  
<http://action.momsrising.org/signup/MRKeepMarchingCircles/>**

## The MomsRising Nuts & Bolts of Making an Impact

### **1: Pick Your Focus and Do an Action Sketch!**

#### **2: Develop Your Message**

#### **3: Identify Your Target**

#### **4: Tactics and How They Work**

**A: Share Your Story! You Are Powerful!** .....PAGE 4

**B: Fast Actions for Busy People: Signing Petitions and Sending Emails - They Matter!** .....PAGE 6

**C: Personalized Letters, Emails, and Postcards** .....PAGE 7

**D: High Impact Phone Calls** .....PAGE 8

**E: Meeting With Elected Officials** .....PAGE 9

**F: Do a Powerful Delivery** .....PAGE 11

**G: Attend Town Halls and Community Forums** .....PAGE 12

**H: Letters to the Editor** .....PAGE 13

**I: Host a #KeepMarching Circle or Other Local Gathering** .....PAGE 14

**J: Use Social Media to Win** .....PAGE 15

**5: In Closing - YOU ROCK!**

# THE MOMSRISING NUTS & BOLTS OF MAKING AN IMPACT

## 1 Pick Your Focus and Do an Action Sketch!

**Action Sketch Components:** (A) What is your focused priority area where you want to make your voice heard? (B) Why is it important for your voice to be heard right now? (C) What change do you want to make? (D) Who has the power to make that change?

**Example of an action sketch: Do you want to protect healthcare? Then here's your action sketch:**

- (A) **What is your focused priority area?** Healthcare
- (B) **Why now?** Some in Congress and Donald Trump are trying to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) right now, despite the fact that it covers nearly 30 million people.
- (C) **Change you want to make?** Protect healthcare coverage for 30 million people, and also protect ACA consumer protections, like no exclusions for pre-existing conditions and no lifetime caps.
- (D) **Who has the power to make the change? (Note: This is also the “target” per below)** Congress is deliberating the ACA now.

## 2 Develop Your Message

The next step to effective organizing and advocacy after picking your focus and doing your action sketch is developing your message. Whether you are trying to communicate with an elected official, the media, or simply trying to get your friends and neighbors engaged, it helps to spend a little time beforehand thinking about your message. Defining what you want your audience to take from your message, and what you want them to do as a result, will make everything from emails to meetings to letters to the editor more effective.

### #KeepMarching Circle Activity:

Spend five minutes drafting a practice message on an issue you care about, then practice it with a partner. Give each other feedback on how you could make your message stronger.

One effective approach to crafting messages is charting your “Problem, Solution, Action.” Your audience needs to know what the problem is, how it can be fixed, and what you want them to do about it. Ideally, you should be able to describe your message with no more than one or two sentences in each area.

- **Problem message:** In the problem message, you want to communicate the scope of the problem and frame it in a way that fits with your values and makes the most compelling case. Include one or two key facts or pieces of data, supported by stories when possible – but not too many, which can be overwhelming. You also want to share who caused the problem and who can fix it.
- **Solution message:** You want to quickly move from laying out the problem to providing the listener with options for how it can be addressed. There needs to be hope for change and clear action steps that can be taken.
- **Action message:** You don't want to ever end a conversation or communication without a call to action. This will look different depending on your audience. Some examples might be: asking an elected official to vote for or against a particular policy, encouraging the public to speak up about why change is needed, or asking someone in your community to make a phone call or share their story. But every message needs to end in action. People want to know what they can do!

When making an ask of elected officials, it may sound like, “Can I count on you to protect my healthcare coverage?” If they say no or they aren’t sure, you want to ask what information or support they might need in order to take the action you requested, and then make a plan to follow up with them.

Once you have your message developed, you are ready for almost any tactic. If you are working on multiple issues, you should consider whether you can effectively group them in a single message or whether it makes more sense to divide them up. Too many messages at one time can dilute your impact.

### ③ Identify Your Target

Knowing your “target” is essential to effective organizing. The *Midwest Academy* provides a useful overview of the process of setting goals, identifying targets, and selecting appropriate tactics in their manual *Organizing for Social Change*. Here are the key things you need to know about how to choose a target:

- **Primary targets:** A primary target is a person who can give you what you want. Primary targets may be in the executive branch like the President, secretaries of various agencies, governors, or mayors; in legislative branches, targets can be leaders and members of Congress, state legislatures, city councils or county commissions; or outside of government like business or civic leaders and CEOs.
- **Secondary targets:** A secondary target is someone who has more power over the primary target than you do. Secondary targets might include a legislative staffer who works on an issue or an assistant, a campaign volunteer or donor, a business or civic leader, or a primary target’s trusted friend. A secondary target might also be your member of Congress who can reach out to other lawmakers who sit on key committees, or a Congressional leader who can try to influence the President.
- **Common target selection pitfalls:** Too often, organizing efforts get off to a poor start because people identify their targets as an institution rather than an individual. One example would be to say you are targeting Congress. Targets are always individuals or a specifically selected group of people you are focusing your efforts on for a particular reason.

People often focus solely on their own elected officials. This can be a good place to start and elected officials tend to be more open to listening to their own constituents. But sometimes it may make sense to target those in the leadership or who sit on key committees. A little digging to see who is on a relevant committee can help you more effectively target your efforts.

- **MomsRising’s approach to targeting:** MomsRising works closely with partner organizations to identify who the best primary targets are on a particular issue, key moments to reach them, and what message and tactics are most likely to be effective. Once we’ve done that, we reach out to our members to offer multiple avenues to have a big impact.

Targeting is about prioritizing. Rarely does anyone have the capacity to focus on all the targets they would like, so it’s important to think about what capacity you have and where you think your efforts would be most effective. Once you’ve decided that, it’s time to focus on tactics.

## 4 Tactics and How They Work

When thinking about tactics to use in a campaign plan, it can be helpful to think of a triangle. At the top are tactics that fewer people take and at the bottom are the mass participation tactics that more people take at the same time. Each set of tactics has its own benefits and all are effective in different ways. It should be noted that mixing multiple tactics is a critically important tactic, too. For instance, MomsRising has found petitions to be particularly high impact when volunteers personally deliver them to key targets, often along with booklets of stories of the ways the policy impacts real people (which is a regular practice for us). This is a mix of several key tactics from different areas of the triangle.

**What's on the triangle?** Near the wider bottom, you'll find high impact mass participation tactics like petitions, marches, and rallies that are very effective in showing widespread public support. Higher up in the triangle are personal letters and emails followed by phone calls. Next you'll find tactics like personal deliveries (of petitions, open letters, booklets of personal stories, or other items) or directly asking questions at town hall meetings. Finally, near the top, you'll find in-person meetings or convincing secondary targets to personally contact primary targets as well.

All of these tactics are impactful, and the ones you use at any particular moment depend on your goals and capacity at the time.

Mixing and matching tactics can be key to having a high impact. In fact, at MomsRising, we find that we get the highest impact from mixing tactics in one central campaign project, so that's why you get so many different ways to take action from us, from invitations to sign a petition, to opportunities to share your story, attend a meeting, write a letter to the editor, deliver a petition, make a call, and more. After people take action, we put the puzzle pieces together for a high overall impact. (We call this "Layer Cake Organizing" because many layers together make a beautiful whole, high-impact message that gets through to those who need to hear it – and also we love cake).

**Here are some specific high impact tactics to mix and match to have an impact:**

### **A. Share Your Story. You Are Powerful!**

It can be easiest to start with what you know—and that's a good thing, because it just so happens that you are powerful.

That's right. Your real-life experiences are more powerful than many people think. It's critical that decision makers hear the stories of those impacted by policies or the lack thereof. It's also incredibly important that these stories are heard in the media because they help shape the public dialogue and build momentum for change. And, it's important that other people hear your story so they know they're not alone, and that when so many people are having the same problem at the same time, it's not an epidemic of personal failings, but a structural issue that we can all solve together. MomsRising works to bring the voices and real world experiences of women, mothers, and the people who love them straight to our local, state, and national leaders to amplify women's voices and advance change that lifts us all.

We collect stories from our members in all our different issue areas. We ask for stories in our action alerts, on our website, and through social media. And we often put them in storybooks and hand deliver them to decision makers (targets). Other times we look through the stories that people have submitted to find people who might be willing to talk to the media or testify when a particular policy is being debated.

Here are a few things to know and think about when you are deciding how to share your story:

- **What's your connection to the issue?** Think about how the policy at hand impacts you. Maybe your family is directly affected by recent executive orders, is afraid you'll lose your healthcare coverage because a family member has a pre-existing condition, lacks paid family and medical leave, or is unable to afford high-quality child care.

Or maybe you aren't directly affected, but you are concerned about how the policy at hand impacts others, like how attacks on families of certain backgrounds undermines who we are as a nation, or you know how important having access to health care, paid leave, and high-quality childcare are for your family, and you think other families need those, too.

- **Reach out to others.** Even if you aren't directly impacted by an issue, you may know someone else who is and you can help by reaching out to them. For example, teachers and school nurses tell some of the most powerful stories about why parents need paid sick leave to care for their sick children. You can ask them to share their story, too!

*Here's a link where you can share stories you come across that you think Congress needs to hear:*

[https://www.momsrising.org/member\\_stories/submit](https://www.momsrising.org/member_stories/submit)

- **Don't be intimidated.** Sharing your story can feel intimidating, but it shouldn't be. You don't need to write a lot. Just a few sentences about how a particular policy impacts your family can be very meaningful. It helps lawmakers connect the people they are supposed to represent with the policies they are debating, and puts faces and names on the statistics they are studying. And it helps media understand what they are reporting.
- **Protecting your privacy.** Your privacy is always top of mind at MomsRising. For instance, when you submit your story to MomsRising, you decide if you are comfortable using your last name or whether you want to keep your name confidential.
- **Supporting you in telling your story.** If an opportunity comes up where your story would be a good fit, MomsRising reaches out to you to see if you'd be interested in sharing it. We provide any support, training/coaching, and help you might need. MomsRising members have testified before Congress and state legislatures, spoken at press conferences, and have been featured in TV and print stories, and more.

Sharing your story is one of the most powerful things you can do. And at MomsRising, we know that none of us tells just one story. The issues facing families overlap and intersect in lots of different ways. We appreciate stories on as many issues as you are willing to share.

**We hope you'll share some of your stories today!**

[https://www.momsrising.org/member\\_stories/submit](https://www.momsrising.org/member_stories/submit)

## #KeepMarching Circle Activity:

Spend a few minutes thinking about your own experiences and what stories you might have that connect to a policy issue. Jot down some notes and make a plan to share your story with MomsRising here:

[https://www.momsrising.org/member\\_stories/submit](https://www.momsrising.org/member_stories/submit)



## B. Fast Actions for Busy People: Signing Petitions and Sending Emails – They Matter!

At MomsRising, we often get asked if signing and sharing petitions and sending emails to decision makers matter. The short answer is YES! In our organization, we have a rule that there's no action without urgency. So anytime you get an alert from us asking you to sign a petition, email your lawmaker, or share an alert on social media, rest assured it's because there's a real chance to move the needle, and that, importantly, we have a high impact plan to deliver the petition signatures to the target.

What happens once you sign a MomsRising petition or click to send an email to your elected official? It depends.

- **If it's urgent...** We make sure it immediately gets into the hands of lawmakers either electronically or in person. We work with partners to figure out exactly when your voice can have the most impact and make sure your message gets to the right person.
- **Creative deliveries and story books.** Other times we collect all the petitions into a big book, along with stories from our members, and volunteers help us hand deliver the package to decision makers. Sometimes this may include an activity, such as inviting members to join us for a creative action like a giant Chutes & Ladders game for early learning on the US Capitol lawn, delivering superhero capes to state lawmakers to ask them to be superheroes for policies that lift families, or taking decorated onesies for paid leave to a city council. (Yes, we've done all of these!) These creative approaches make signatures even more powerful, attract media coverage, and we love it when members are able to join us to deliver them.
- **Back us up!** When MomsRising members or staff are delivering petitions, we may reach out to ask you to back us up while we're doing it by making a phone call or sending an email to your local elected official to let them know that, even though you can't be there, the MomsRising members in their office are speaking for you as they deliver your petition signature. It makes a huge difference when leaders know the people they represent are paying attention.
- **Make it personal.** At the state and local level especially, we may ask you to send an email directly to your legislator and provide you with sample language. Even if you only have a second, it's very important that you hit send so elected officials know people in their district are following and care about these issues.

And if you have an extra minute or two, you can make your email even more powerful by adding why you personally care about the issue and sharing a related experience if you have one. On petition pages, you can add personal comments and stories in the comment box and those will get delivered as well. The more personal it feels, the higher the impact! But no matter what you have time to do, we will make sure it is high impact.

- **Share.** Members sharing actions on social media is key. You know what matters to families in your own community, and you are a trusted source of information for your friends and neighbors. Sharing on your own social media networks, in Facebook groups or parent organizations to which you belong, on Twitter, or on local listservs makes a tremendous difference in how many people take action and connects new members to our shared efforts. When you do, you can share safely knowing that MomsRising has done the research to make sure what we put out is accurate and that it's a situation where taking action at the moment really can make a difference.

## C. Personalized Letters, Emails, and Postcards

Personalizing your communications is a great way to get an elected official's attention. You can personalize emails through MomsRising's action alerts as described above. Other good options for personalizing your messages are sending an email directly to a lawmaker, posting on their Facebook page, Tweeting a message to them, or sending personal letters or postcards.

### Here are a few tips to make these written, personalized communications more effective:

- Research their position before you write. Know what key concerns they may have so you can provide useful information. Think about what messages might be most persuasive given their position.
- Always start with the proper title, such as Honorable, Congressman/Senator, Councilmember, etc.
- Keep your letter clear, concise, factual, and one page or less. Letters are most effective when they focus on a single issue.
- Be polite.
- State the reason you are writing in the first paragraph. Also in the first paragraph, be clear about the issue and what you want them to do. State specifically if you want them to vote YES or NO on a certain policy, and include the relevant bill title and/or bill number if you know it.
- If you are a constituent, mention that early in the letter.
- If you writing about a specific piece of legislation, know the bill's name and number.
- Follow up statements with facts to support them, and cite sources whenever possible.
- Make it personal. Share your own experience and how you see the issue impacting your family and others in your community.
- Have a clear ask, and politely request that they respond to let you know their position.
- Don't forget to put your email address and your physical address on both emails and letters. You want them to be able to respond to you. Your address also proves you are a constituent.
- Postcards are becoming a popular alternative to letters because they are quick, easy, and remove some of the security concerns that can slow down the arrival of sealed mail.

### Make it a party with friends!

Letter or postcard writing is a fun activity to do with friends. Consider inviting friends over to write letters together. You can choose whether to provide stationary and snacks or have friends pitch in. It's helpful to have addresses on hand and some facts printed out on whatever issue you are addressing for people to include in their letters.

*Download a MomsRising postcard here:* [https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.momsrising.org/images/Persist\\_Postcard.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.momsrising.org/images/Persist_Postcard.pdf)

### #KeepMarching Circle Activity:

Write a quick postcard to an elected official telling them your concerns on an issue and urging them to take action.

### Get crafty!

Making your own stationary or postcards can make the process even more fun. You can buy craft supplies, design something on your computer, or ask your kids to draw pictures on cardstock cut into postcard size. This will help your letter stand out.



## D. High Impact Phone Calls

Phone calls are another fast, personal and high impact way to let your target know you are paying attention and want them to act. While calls can be intimidating at first, they are easy and can be very effective, especially at the state and local level where offices are less likely to receive a high volume of calls. For example, even just five to ten calls at the state level can make a difference.

***Text JOIN to RISING (which is 747464) and we will make it easy for you to call leaders just when your voice is most needed.***

### **Here are some quick tips to make your phone calls most effective:**

- Call your lawmaker at their legislative office. A legislative assistant or intern will likely answer, or you may be directed to voicemail.
- Increasingly, high call volume to Congressional offices means people often can't get through or are finding mailboxes are full. Don't give up! For members of Congress, they may have multiple offices in the state in addition to the national office. Try those numbers, too. Faxing a message may also be an option.
- Lawmakers typically keep track of how many people are calling for or against an issue. It's okay to call more than once on the same issue.
- Spend a few minutes thinking through what you want to say before you call. It can be helpful to jot down the main idea you want to make sure you cover. Be sure to keep it short and to tell them clearly if you are YES or NO on a policy. If you are personally affected by the decision, make sure to let them know that, too.
- Identify yourself, any organization you are affiliated with if you feel like that's helpful, and let them know where you live so they know you are from their district.
- Keep your message brief. Three sentences is a max. Like an effective letter, be sure to make a specific ask of your lawmaker, i.e. "Please vote YES" or "Please vote NO." If you want, you can start by asking if the lawmaker has a position on the issue you are calling about, and then target your ask based on the response.
- When calling about a specific piece of legislation, make sure you know the bill number and name and mention it in your message.
- If you'd like a response back regarding the lawmaker's position, be sure to ask for one and give your phone number, email, or mailing address where you can be reached.
- If the person taking your call mentions specific concerns the lawmaker has on an issue, contact policy organizations who work on that area or visit their websites for useful resources you can share with your lawmaker in a follow up email or letter.
- Be polite and thank them for their time. Your long-term goal is to build a relationship with the lawmaker and those in their office, so you want to make sure you set the right tone even when you disagree.

## E. Meetings With Elected Officials

In-person meetings are another high impact and effective way of communicating with and influencing decision makers. They show lawmakers that their constituents care deeply about an issue, help connect an abstract issue with a human face, and allow lawmakers a chance to ask questions and for you to share new information.

In-person meetings can happen at the decision maker's office in Washington, DC, in their state capital, or when they are home in their districts. You might schedule a meeting as part of an organized lobby day, or on your own. In-person meetings are particularly powerful at the local level and can be much easier to set up.

Ideally, the meeting will be with your elected official, but it can also be effective to meet with a staff person or legislative assistant who focuses on the issue you are addressing. This is particularly true for members of Congress or an executive branch agency. In those cases, legislators depend on advice from staff because they can't follow all the issues. Having a key staffer on your side can be critical.

### #KeepMarching Circle Activity:

In your group, spend 20 minutes role-playing a pre-meeting and a meeting with a legislator. Pick one person to be the legislator. She or he will decide if they are supportive, hostile, or neutral. The rest of the group should pick an issue and hold a pre-meeting to prepare. Then role-play meeting with the lawmaker. Talk afterwards about what you learned and what was most helpful.

### Here are some tips to make your meetings effective:

- **Call early to schedule your meeting.** Sometimes this can take several weeks. It's especially important to call early if you are trying to schedule a meeting during a Congressional recess because those fill up quickly. When possible, don't wait until right before a decision is about to be made to reach out for a meeting. You'll likely need to let the scheduler know how many people to expect.
- **Do your research about the elected leader's position.** To achieve the best results, know the legislation's name and number, current status, and your target's previous voting record on these types of issues. Bonus points if you can find out whether the elected representative you are meeting with is on any relevant committees. Try to identify and understand your target's position, and any particular concerns they may have that you can address. You can do a lot of this research on the Internet. You can also call their office and ask their staff questions about where they stand on an issue or find out about any of the other topics listed above, before you go in for the meeting.
- **Develop your main talking points.** What are the key facts you want them to know about your issue? Why does it matter to their constituents? Who will it impact? Write down your very short three main points and print them out before you go in for the meeting. Be prepared to respond to opposition arguments.
- **Find or develop materials to leave behind.** It's helpful to have a factsheet that you can refer to and leave behind. Reach out to groups like MomsRising that do this work for resources. News stories and op-eds are also good options. Make sure to have something to leave, along with your contact information on it.

- **Pick your team.** The most effective meetings usually involve a small group of constituents, ideally no more than six, who can share a variety of perspectives on the issue. You might want to include someone directly affected, someone from the business or faith community, and/or a local civic leader. If you have a relationship with someone who would count as a secondary target – someone who personally knows the elected official, who volunteered on their campaign, or has some other direct connection – it would be great to include that person, too.
- **Pre-meetings are critically important.** Before any meeting with an elected official or primary target, it's important to schedule time for all those attending to meet together to review the goals, message, and strategy for the meeting and decide who will play what roles. These are best done in person, but can also be done on a conference call if necessary, or right before the meeting.
  - Basic review of the legislation or topic you are focusing on in your meeting. Make sure everyone knows where it is in the process and how your target can influence the outcome.
  - Share any background on outreach that has been done on this issue so far, and what you know about the target's current position, such as any concerns they may have and how they voted previously.
  - Discuss and brainstorm the goals for the meeting. What do you want the outcome to be? Decide on what your ask will be.
  - Discuss what roles each person will play in the meeting and the order that you all will be speaking. Choose a spokesperson who will get the meeting started and help facilitate. Pick a note taker. Decide who will make the ask. Make sure everyone has a part to play.
  - Decide what information you think is most important to share. Effective meetings include a balance of sharing personal stories, information on the broader impact, and facts that help address any concerns.
  - Reach agreement on what you would like the agenda of the meeting to look like.

### **IN YOUR MEETING, DO:**

- Have the group spokesperson start you off and have members of the group introduce themselves and thank the leader and/or their staff for being there with you. Be polite and avoid personal criticism. You may disagree, but this meeting is part of building a longer term relationship, and there may be future areas where you agree. You need to be able to work with them as long as they are in office.
- Share why you are there and state clearly what you are asking the lawmaker to do. If this is regarding legislation, have the name and bill number.
- Take turns sharing why this matters to you, providing relevant facts. Feel free to share a personal story, but keep it brief and tie it back to your ask of the lawmaker. Communicate why this matters to other constituents they represent and the community impact. Stay focused on a few key messages you want the target to hear.
- Ask if the target has any questions or concerns you could help answer. Don't worry if you don't know all the answers. Just say, "I don't know, but I'll find out and get back to you!" Don't try to fake it.

#### CONTINUED...

#### IN YOUR MEETING, DO:

- Make your ask for their support.
  - If they are supportive, ask if they need resources or how you can help. You might follow up with a specific ask about whether they would be willing to do something else to move it forward, like reaching out to colleagues.
  - If they are not supportive, try to find out why and ask if they have questions for which you could help find answers. Are there resources that could be helpful? If so, offer to follow up with those. Don't argue with them, even when you disagree. Use this as a chance to educate them and try to address their concerns, but avoid being confrontational.
  - Thank them for meeting with you.

#### IN YOUR MEETING, DON'T:

- Feel intimidated! Remember, lawmakers work for all of us, so it's important for them to hear about the issues we care about most.
- Think you have to be an expert on the issue. Your personal experiences are what matter most and you don't need to be able to talk about technical policy specifics to make your views known.
- Get off topic or ramble for too long. Stay focused on what you care about most as time will be limited and you want to be sure to get your message across.
- Speak disrespectfully to your member of Congress or their staff. We know that strong emotions accompany many issue areas – being passionate is great, being rude is not.

- **Follow up.** In addition to getting support on your issue, in-person meetings are about building relationships with the decision maker. Write to say thank you and to provide any requested materials. If they commit to a specific action, follow it and write to thank them if they do what you requested.

## F. Do a Powerful Delivery!

Another effective, high-level tactic is doing a delivery to a decision maker's office. MomsRising members often do deliveries of story books, petitions, or open letters to elected leaders, sometimes with a fun, related item to illustrate the point. For example, right now, we have storybooks ready to go on health care, early learning, criminal justice reform, and more. We'd love for you to sign up to deliver them directly to your representatives in your local community. Some of our story deliveries are targeted at members of Congress, while others are made for mayors and city council members. Deliveries are easy to do, but make a big impact.

### Here's how a delivery works:

- Decide what you want to deliver. This could be a MomsRising storybook, open letter, or petition. It could also be a personal note or card with some factsheets or news stories you pull together.
- If you are delivering to a member of Congress, it might make sense to call ahead to let them know you're planning to stop by, but that is not generally necessary for state legislatures. Local elected officials often have more limited office hours, so you might want to check when would be a good time to stop by.
- Deliveries are great to do with kids, because they are quick, easy, & kids help make an even bigger impression.
- With a delivery, you typically don't expect to meet with the actual decision makers, except perhaps at the local level. Typically you will be leaving your item with a staffer.
- Think ahead of time about what you'd like to say when you drop off your delivery. Introduce yourself, let them know you are a constituent, and tell them what you are dropping off and why you wanted to provide the decision maker with additional information. This would also be a good time to repeat your ask of what you are hoping the decision maker will do as a result.
- Sometimes MomsRising sends out a request for volunteers, asking our members to join us to deliver to certain members of Congress or to entire state legislatures. When that happens, all you have to do is RSVP and show up. Kids are welcome and MomsRising will provide all the materials and what you need to know. Having volunteers help with deliveries makes a huge impact, which can be even bigger when those who can't join us call and email their representatives to let them know to expect us.

## G. Attend Town Halls and Community Forums

Town halls and community forums are another valuable opportunity to communicate your priorities, thank leaders, and hold elected leaders accountable. These are often held during Congressional recess or before things start moving in state or local sessions. In some places, local elected officials hold “coffee with council” or “breakfast with the commissioners.” You can often find these opportunities by checking your representative's website or signing up to be on their mailing list. Can't find one? Call their office directly and ask.

### Here are some tips to make your town hall experience a success:

- **Prepare your questions ahead of time.** Have several different short question options ready in case someone else asks your question first. The best questions are very short, fact-based, refer to the decision maker's record on the issue, refers to how this issue impacts their constituents, and has a clear ask. Examples of asks might be to commit to voting a certain way or co-sponsoring legislation. Sometimes organizations, including MomsRising, have sample questions you can use.
- **Come early if you can.** You want to get a seat near the front or on an aisle where it's easier to get your question recognized.
- **Be polite, but expect answers.** The decision maker may try to not directly answer your question. If this happens, ask a follow up or let them know you don't feel like they are answering you. Hold on to the mic after you ask your initial question so you will be able to follow up if necessary.
- **Always, always say thank you.** Elected leaders get a lot of people who are unhappy reaching out to them, so the power of a thank you is magnified. Be sure to use it and say thank you.
- **Support others.** Make your support for other questions known by clapping or cheering.

## What if your representative is not holding town halls?

An increasing number of representatives are not holding town halls because they don't want to face those unhappy with them. Here are some things you can do if there is no town hall scheduled for your area:

- Check to see if there are other public events on the elected leader's calendar you could attend.
- If there aren't any events listed, call and ask for information on when s/he will be participating in a public event.
- If they tell you they aren't doing public events, make an ask that they schedule some.
- If they still fail to provide public event opportunities for feedback, let them know via phone, email, or letter that as their constituent you are disappointed that they are not making themselves accessible.
- Consider writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper about your disappointment.
- Share your frustration on social media.
- You might even start a community petition through a petition site calling on your representative to hold a public meeting. You could deliver the petition to your elected official.

## H. Letters to the Editor

Letters to the editor are another powerful and often overlooked tool. Decision makers often look to the media in their home district to see what issues are important to their members.

### Here are some things to think about in crafting your letter:

- **Be direct.** Make one point or at most two in your letter. Start with a catchy opening and use the active tense.
- **Keep it short.** Papers typically take between 150-200 words. Check with your local paper for their limits.
- **Be timely.** You can mention a recent specific article or letter that appeared in their paper, and refer to the title, date, or author when possible. You can search to see what the paper has covered recently or set up Google alerts to let you know when issues you care about are being discussed.
- **Support your facts.** If you cite data, indicate where you found it. Refute or support specific statements, or address relevant facts that were left out. Avoid attacking the reporter or newspaper.
- **Local impact.** Make it relevant to your local community. If it's a national issue, share how it would affect your area.
- **Do your research.** What kind of letters does the paper typically run. Is there a format or length they prefer?
- **Be professional.** This is not a letter to a friend. Write at a level appropriate for the community and avoid jargon.
- **Encourage others to write!** Your local paper may only allow you to submit a certain number of stories, but you can amplify your impact by reaching out to others to ask them to write and providing some talking points if they need them.

### #KeepMarching Circle Activity:

Take five minutes and outline a letter to the editor that you would like to send to your local paper. Share your outline with a partner for feedback.





## I. Host a #KeepMarching Circle or Other Local Gathering

One incredibly important tactic is engaging others. You can have a big impact as an individual, and many individuals together have an even bigger impact. #KeepMarching Circles or any local gathering of like-minded friends are a powerful tool for doing this. You can use them to identify shared concerns, get educated on issues or tactics, or make taking action more fun by doing it together.

The easiest way to get started is reach out to those around you. You could do this in your neighborhood, local listservs, on social media, or in groups to which you belong. Let people know you are ready to do more and want to find out if there are others interested in joining you.

*Let us know if you're going to start a #KeepMarching Circle, or would like to hold a local gathering, by clicking here so we can support you:  
<http://action.momsrising.org/signup/MRKeepMarchingCircles/>*

### How to hold a #KeepMarching Circle or Gathering:

- **Pick a location.** If it's only people you know, you could consider doing it at your home. Other good locations are libraries, parks, or restaurants.
- **It's up to you what it looks like.** You can provide snacks or have people pitch in. You could open it to kids, whole families, or just adults.
- **Pick a time that works best for you.** Doodle polls can be a good way to coordinate times if needed, and things like Facebook events or Evites can help you communicate with those who are coming.

- **Decide what you want to do.** For the first meet up, it may be helpful to spend some time letting people get to know each other and sharing what issues are most important to them. At other meetups, you might want to focus on a specific topic, learn some new tactics, or strategize about the tactic you want to do together. (MomsRising has you covered on a list of topics. If you sign up that you're holding a #KeepMarching Circle, then we can help you every step of the way. Here's that #KeepMarching Circle sign up link again: <http://action.momsrising.org/signup/MRKeepMarchingCircles/>).

In addition, doing an action sketch together (as described in detail above) at a meeting will likely be very helpful. Here's a summary of the action sketch components again: **(A)** What is your focused priority area where you want to make your voice heard? **(B)** Why is it important for your voice to be heard right now? **(C)** What change do you want to make? **(D)** Who has the power to make that change?

- **Resources to use!** MomsRising has toolkits ready on a wide range of our issues that include resources, discussion questions, and even related crafts for kids. You can download some of them here:
  - **Holding a Moms Meetup Toolkit:** <http://moms.ly/familiestoolkit>
  - **Paid Family and Medical Leave Toolkit:** <http://moms.ly/paidleavetoolkit>
  - **Healthcare Gathering Toolkit:** <http://moms.ly/healthcaretoolkit>
  - **Gun Safety Gathering Toolkit:** <http://moms.ly/gunsafetytoolkit>
  - **Early Education Toolkit:** <http://moms.ly/2kU04Rj>

## J. Use Social Media To Win

Social media is a powerful tool for organizing and making sure your voice is heard. It should be noted that many people are now getting their news directly from social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, so when you post messages, you're actually part of the media and are providing a service to your friends and followers!

There are a number of social media platforms out there: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Tumblr and more. You get to decide what makes the most sense for you, and for the community you're engaging.

Facebook has the largest user base, so it's where you're most likely to find people you can meet up with and learn from. On Facebook, you can not only post on your own page, but you also can join local and national groups. Groups are different from pages; groups are more informal and often allow individual members to post and converse. Post-election, numerous Facebook groups have formed to share information and organize locally. Look for one in your area and then you can post about what you're doing there as well as learn about what others are doing. Facebook also provides many organizing tools like surveys apps and event pages if you want to invite people to your #KeepMarching Circle or other gathering.

On Twitter, you can not only Tweet out actions for people to take and news that you see as relevant, you can also follow news media like the New York Times or AP for breaking news. You can also find many policy insiders on Twitter who like to provide the inside scoop on issues they are seeing first hand.

The bigger your networks on these channels, the bigger an audience you have for your own thoughts and views. Finally, virtually every public figure has a Facebook page and Twitter feed, where you can politely direct your thoughts and opinions. (A thank you goes a long way on social media, too, particularly because elected leaders are often awash in complaints).



## 5 In Closing – YOU ROCK!

Thank you for taking the time to work with MomsRising and help build a nation where everyone can thrive. Your voice is needed now more than ever—and mixing and matching the above tactics is a great way to make your voice heard. Please note that you don't have to do a mix of ALL the above tactics on the same day, week, month or year as everyone else. Do what works for you. Other people are taking action and choosing the tactics that work for them too, so it all adds up over the country. Doing what you can do, in the time you have to do it, has an impact.

Before we go, one note is that you can use this toolkit for holding a #KeepMarching Circle meeting or other local gathering to get started talking about what tactics might work best for you and your community.

And check back with MomsRising often: In the near future, we'll be adding trainings about how to tell your story, more information on how Congress and state legislatures operate, and more sample agendas for #KeepMarching Circle meetings.

Whatever tactics you decide work best for you, MomsRising is here as a resource for you. Keep us posted on your progress by emailing [info@momsrising.org](mailto:info@momsrising.org), which we may even share on our blog as inspiration. Together, let's #KeepMarching!

Thank you for ALL you're doing!

**Giant thank you to Beth Messersmith for leading the way  
on envisioning, outlining, and creating this  
#KeepMarching MomsRising Advocacy & Organizing Tactics  
and Tips guide along with the MomsRising Team.**

**MomsRising.org is an online and on-the-ground grassroots organization of more than a million people who are working to achieve economic security for all families in the United States.**

**MomsRising is working for paid family leave, flexible work options, affordable childcare, and for an end to the wage and hiring discrimination which penalizes so many others. MomsRising also advocates for better childhood nutrition, health care for all, toxic-free environments, and breastfeeding rights so that all children can have a healthy start.**

**Established in 2006, MomsRising and its members are organizing and speaking out to improve public policy and to change the national dialogue on issues that are critically important to America's families. In 2013, Forbes.com named MomsRising's web site as one of the Top 100 Websites For Women for the fourth year in a row and Working Mother magazine included MomsRising on its "Best of the Net" list.**

**MomsRising.org**  
**MamásConPoder.org**