

Engaging Candidates and Lawmakers in Tele-Town Halls and Virtual Events

Now in an era of social distancing, tele-town halls and virtual events, like Facebook Lives, have quickly emerged as the most common way for candidates and lawmakers to engage their communities.

Tips for effectively engaging candidates and lawmakers:

Step 1: Find the Candidates and Lawmakers

- Check their official website, especially the events page to find where they will be.
- Check local news sources, including events and community forums, and online resources like www.townhallproject.com.
- Join their email list. They often will tell you when they are holding events.
- Follow them on social media. Most candidates and lawmakers have a Facebook page and a Twitter handle and will share information about upcoming events.

Step 2: Get Ready to Engage the Candidate or Lawmaker

- Work with SCAN staff on a great question. Adding your personal story will make your question stronger and more likely to be selected.
- Be ready to pivot back to your question if the conversation moves onto another topic.
- Mention SCAN if it's a conference call and wear a SCAN swag if it is virtual. Remember, there is power in numbers, so it is essential they know you are speaking as a constituent and part of a more extensive network of children advocates.
- Be one of the first to join so that you can get your question in the queue. Often they ask for people to sign up to ask their questions on a first-come-first-served basis.
- Stay on message and only engage the official on the point at hand. Don't get distracted by the issues of the day.

Step 3: Follow-up

- Use social media to thank or encourage a lawmaker or candidate after a tele-town hall or virtual event with a photo wearing SCAN swag. Remember to tag the official.
- After it is over, take a few minutes to jot down notes of what you asked and their response.
- If the candidate or lawmaker had specific questions, follow-up with their staff, and provide additional information. Even better, try and set up a virtual meeting with them to further discuss the issue.
- Share your experience with SCAN staff!