

American Association of  
Child & Adolescent  
Psychiatry

# AACAP

## 2025 LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

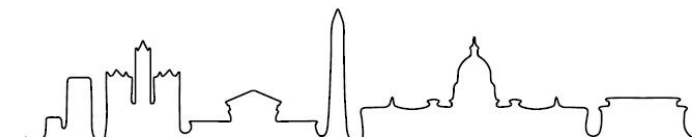
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May 5-6, 2025  
Washington, DC



# Agenda

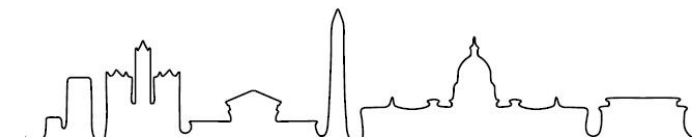
- Welcome
  - Tami Benton, MD, AACAP President
  - Laura Willing, MD and Melvin Oatis, MD, Advocacy Committee Chairs
- AACAP Advocacy Policy Review
  - Alexis Geier Horan, AACAP Chief of Advocacy and Practice Transformation
- Introduction to Hill Visit Scheduling App
  - Eliza Meguschar, Advocacy Associates
- Review of Advocacy Materials and Hill Day Resources
  - Ben Melano, AACAP Director of Federal Affairs
- State Break Out Rooms
  - Davis Hagigh, AACAP Government Affairs and PAC Manager



# First, thank you to our advocacy leaders!

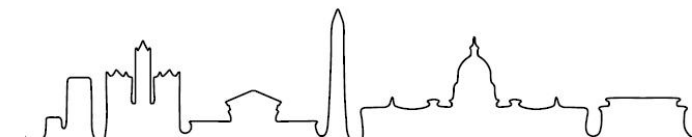
## Advocacy Committee Members

- Melvin Oatis, MD (NY) *Co-chair*
- Laura Willing, MD (MD) *Co-chair*
- Daisy Bassen, MD (RI)
- Avanti Bergquist, MD (WA)
- Clarence Chou, MD (WI)
- Suzanne Don, MD (AZ)
- Jennifer Dorr, DO (MD)
- Robert Holloway, MD (CA)
- Courtney Kandler, MD (MD)
- Roshni Koli, MD (TX)
- Chris Rogers, MD (CO)
- Adam Sagot, DO (NJ)
- Justin Schreiber, DO (PA)



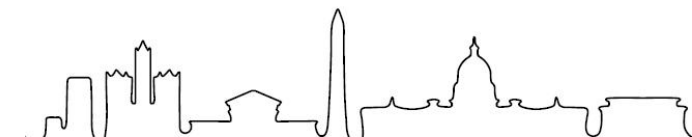
# AACAP Government Affairs and Clinical Practice Staff

- Alexis Geier Horan, *Chief of Advocacy & Practice Transformation*
- Karen Ferguson, *Deputy Director of Clinical Practice*
- Ben Melano, *Deputy Director of Federal Affairs*
- Emily Rohlffs, *State Advocacy & ROCAP Engagement Manager*
- Fernando Valles, *Clinical Practice Program Manager*
- Davis Hagigh, *Government Affairs & PAC Manager*



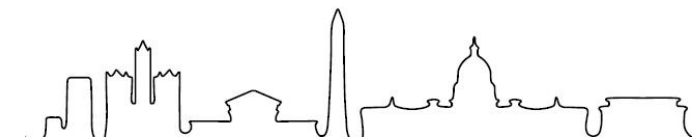
# AACAP Advocacy Guiding Principles

- All children, adolescents and young adults deserve access to high quality, affordable pediatric mental health and substance use disorder care.
- Mental health and substance use disorder care should be as accessible as physical health care.
- Science/best practice should guide policy.
- Access requires investment in a robust and diverse mental healthcare workforce.



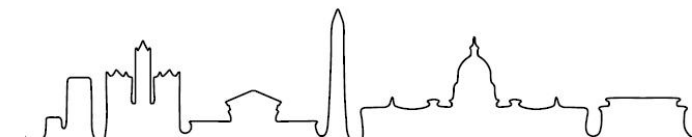
# Your Role on the Hill

- Amplify AACAP's voice
  - Build relationships with policymakers
  - Educate legislators
- 
- You know these issues! Tell your story, share your experiences



# AACAP Advocacy Review

- What are we asking for on May 6?
  - Protect Medicaid
  - Promote medical mental health care
- Elephant in the room
  - Reductions in Medicaid/HHS reorganization and concerns related to psychotropic medication threaten progress on mental health policy
- Direct messaging to counter threats to access to mental health care and the expertise of our members
  - 40% of children receive mental health benefits through Medicaid
  - Science and clinical best practice should guide how the federal government addresses our nation's mental health crisis





# Protect Medicaid

## Protect Medicaid to Support Children's Access to Behavioral Health Services

### Issue

American children deserve healthcare that provides access to mental health services. The current Budget Reconciliation plan threatens to cut Medicaid coverage for children.

### Background

- America has a children's mental health crisis.
- Nearly 20% of children and young people ages 3-17 in the U.S. have a mental, emotional, developmental, or behavioral disorder, and suicidal behaviors among high school students increased more than 40% in the decade before 2019.
- Medicaid is the country's single largest payer of behavioral health services for all ages.
- Children comprise 43% of all Medicaid enrollees and are the single largest beneficiary group of Medicaid.
- Medicaid funds community-based mental health providers including through Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics.
- Proposed changes to Medicaid, such as per capita caps on federal matching funds and the elimination of Medicaid expansion, will cause undue budgetary constraints on states and jeopardize states' ability to offer adequate coverage & care for millions of children.
- Reductions in Medicaid threaten children's access to critical mental health services and the already scarce workforce that treats them.

### Requests

- Prevent harmful cuts to Medicaid that would decrease critical access to behavioral health services for children.
- Prioritize continued Medicaid funding to ensure children in our underserved communities can access life-saving mental health care.





## Promote Medical Mental Health Care to Solve our Nation's Pediatric Mental Health Crisis

### Issue

The reorganization of federal health services and attacks on the role of medicine in mental health care threaten to undo decades of progress for youth mental health.

### Background


- The reorganization, and subsequent downsizing, of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) jeopardizes the ability to treat substance use disorder, prevent suicide, and identify shortages in healthcare professionals at a time when the mental health of our nation's youth continues to worsen.
- 10% reduction of the 988 Lifeline workforce will diminish the ability of 988 to adequately field the hundreds of thousands of monthly calls the service receives.
- Millions of dollars in substance use and mental health block grants have been cancelled or rescinded. This both puts state budgets in an unstable position and cuts off access to critical behavioral health services for children.
- The Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) FY26 budget proposal plans to eliminate several federal health programs of vital importance to youth mental health, such as Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers and Mental and Behavioral Health Education and Training, and reduce funding for retained programs.
- HHS leadership's approach to the prescription of psychotropic medication threatens access for millions of children who need these treatments. Psychotropic medication has proven safe, effective, and lifesaving when prescribed for youth populations and used as directed by trained physicians.
- Untreated mental health conditions contribute directly to exacerbated mental health issues, declining physical health, and worse.

### Requests

- Continue to fund federal mental health programs at adequate levels to best meet the needs of our child and adolescent populations.
- Utilize available input from medical professional societies to ensure any structural changes to federal health programs prioritize developmentally informed, family-centered, and evidence-based approaches.

Science and  
medicine  
should guide  
MH policy

# Where is the legislative ask?



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Legislation to Improve Access to Children's Behavioral Health Care  
119<sup>th</sup> Congress

**H.R. 1735/S. 779, *Early Action and Responsiveness Lifts Youth (EARLY) Minds Act***  
This bipartisan legislation would provide early intervention and prevention services to children and adults struggling with mental health challenges. It would empower states by allowing them to allocate up to 5% of their Mental Health Block Grant for prevention and early intervention activities.

Please cosponsor and advance H.R. 1735/S. 779, *Early Action and Responsiveness Lifts Youth (EARLY) Minds Act*, as introduced by Reps. August Pfluger (R-TX), Kathy Castor (D-FL), John Joyce, MD (R-PA), and Kim Schrier, MD (D-VT) and Sens. Alex Padilla (D-CA), Thom Tillis (R-NC), Tim Kaine (D-VA), and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK).

**H.R. 2223, *Building Capacity for Care Act***  
The legislation would help solve the facility shortage issue by creating grants, loans, and loan guarantees to fund the construction, renovation, or purchase of behavioral health facilities that provide short-term inpatient care, partial hospitalization, intensive outpatient care, and/or crisis stabilization. It prioritizes areas with the most need, preference for grant funding would go to facilities that are located in a mental health provider shortage area, or in areas that are consistently above the national average for suicide or overdose deaths in the last three years.

Please cosponsor H.R. 2223, *Building Capacity for Care Act*, introduced by Reps. Andrea Salinas (D-OR) and Becca Balint (D-VT). AACAP urges a companion bill for H.R. 2223 to be introduced in the Senate.

**H.R. 1585/S. 709, *Conrad State 30 and Physician Access Reauthorization Act***  
This bipartisan legislation would reauthorize and modify the Conrad 30 program, which allows foreign doctors studying in the U.S. to obtain a visa following their medical residency if they practice in medically-underserved area for at least three years.

Please cosponsor and advance H.R. 1585/S. 709, *Conrad State 30 and Physician Access Reauthorization Act*, as introduced by Reps. David Valadao (R-CA), Don Bacon (R-NE), Brad Schneider (D-IL), and Sylvia Garcia (D-TX) and Sens. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Susan Collins (R-ME), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), and Thom Tillis (R-NC).

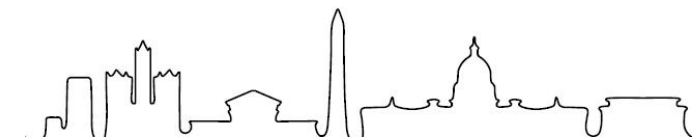
**H.R. 2078/S. 942, *Resident Education Deferred Interest (REDI) Act***  
This bipartisan legislation would provide for interest-free deferment on student loans for borrowers who are in a medical or dental internship or residency program.

Please cosponsor and advance H.R. 2078/S. 942, *Resident Education Deferred Interest (REDI) Act*, as introduced by Reps. Brian Babin, DDS (R-TX) and Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA) and Sens. Jacky Rosen (D-NV) and John Boozman (R-AR).

- Several MH-related bills in Congress
  - Part of the ask but not the priority message

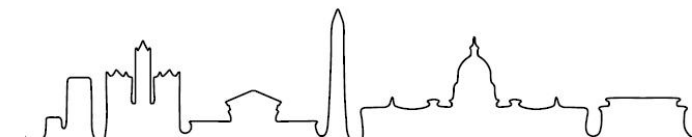
# Preparing for your Congressional Meetings

- Every participant will be part of a meeting group (based on geography)
- For groups of 3 or more, pick a meeting "lead"
  - Leads can open the meeting, facilitate introductions, and help assign discussion topics during meeting practices
  - Leads for House meetings are the Member of Congress's constituent
- You will have an opportunity to collaborate with your group members tonight and again on Monday, May 5



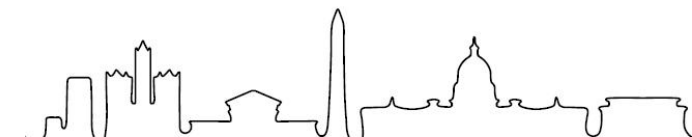
# Preparing for your Congressional Meeting

- Develop a pitch—if solo or as part of a team meeting
  - SAMPLE PITCH
    - Thank you for taking our meeting. We are child and adolescent psychiatrists (and/or patient advocates) from [city/state].
    - Access to mental health care for kids and families is limited and we are concerned that current proposals within the Administration and in Congress will further limit access.
    - Discuss Medicaid concerns
    - Discuss concerns that reductions in workforce/funding at federal MH/SUD agencies will negatively impact access to care and support for the MH/SUD workforce
    - Talk from experience; refer to the reference materials; offer to be a local resource
    - **Thank the Member of Congress/staff**



# Preparing for your Congressional Meeting

- You don't have to memorize anything!
  - You will have a "cheat sheet" and a folder of "leave behind" materials for each office you visit
- This information is also on our website and on the scheduling app
  - [www.aacap.org/legcon](http://www.aacap.org/legcon)
- Familiarize yourself with the scheduling app
  - Eliza walk-through





# AdvocacyDay App and Logistics Overview



**From:** AdvocacyDay <[advocacyday@advocacyassociates.com](mailto:advocacyday@advocacyassociates.com)>  
**Date:** November 4, 2024 at 11:10:00 AM EST  
**To:** Kaytee Yakacki <>  
**Subject:** Schedule for Sample Lobby Day

Hello Kaytee Yakacki,

You can access your meeting schedule for Sample Lobby Day on our free "AdvocacyDay" app, available in the App Store for Apple devices and in the Google Play Store for Android devices.

**If you already have the AdvocacyDay App downloaded to your device, it is critical you have the most up-to-date version downloaded before logging in.**

The directions to access are as follows:

- In your device's app store, search for "AdvocacyDay" (all one word) and download it.
- On the login screen, enter the following email address: [your email address](#)
- You will be emailed a 6-digit code to enter on the next screen.
- If you are a part of multiple organizations in our app, you will be prompted to choose your organization here. For Sample Lobby Day, please choose O. If you are only a part of one organization, you will be brought directly to your meeting schedule page.
- There is a Support button on the login screen if you have any issues, or you can contact support here: [advocacyday.net/testorg/support](https://advocacyday.net/testorg/support)

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[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.advocacyday.android&hl=en\\_US&gl=US](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.advocacyday.android&hl=en_US&gl=US)

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Thank you,  
Advocacy Associates

## Downloading the App

- You will receive an **automated email from Advocacy Associates** on a **to-be-determined date** by your organization
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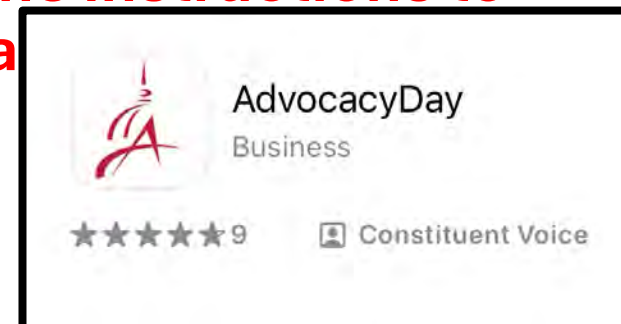
[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.advocacyday.android&hl=en\\_US&gl=US](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.advocacyday.android&hl=en_US&gl=US)

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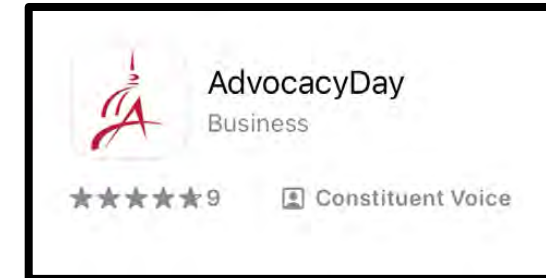
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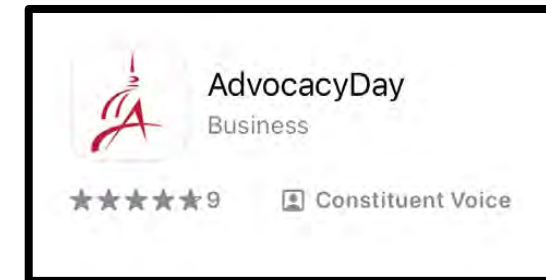
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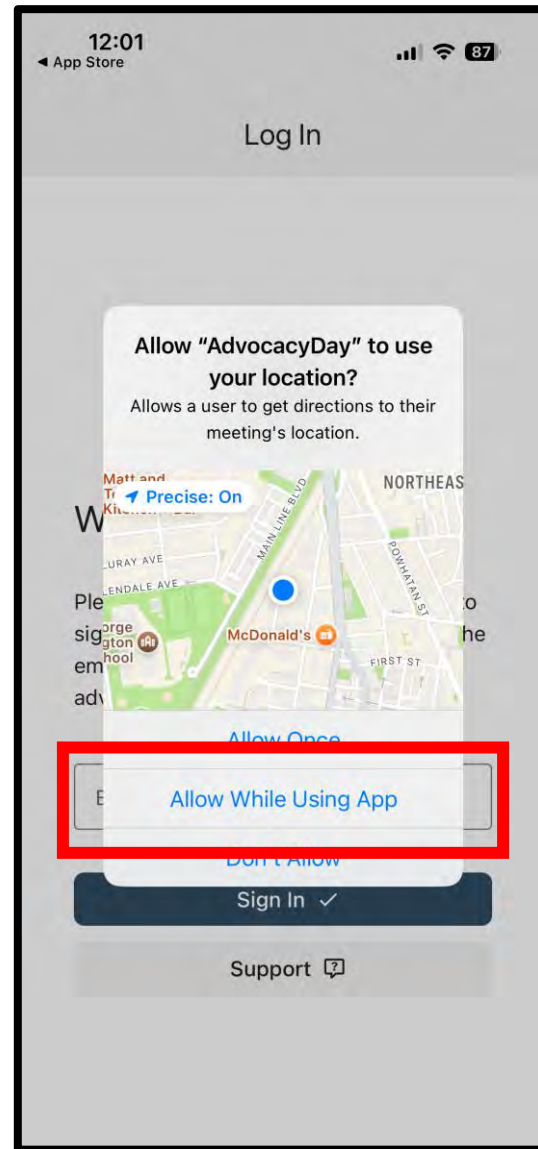
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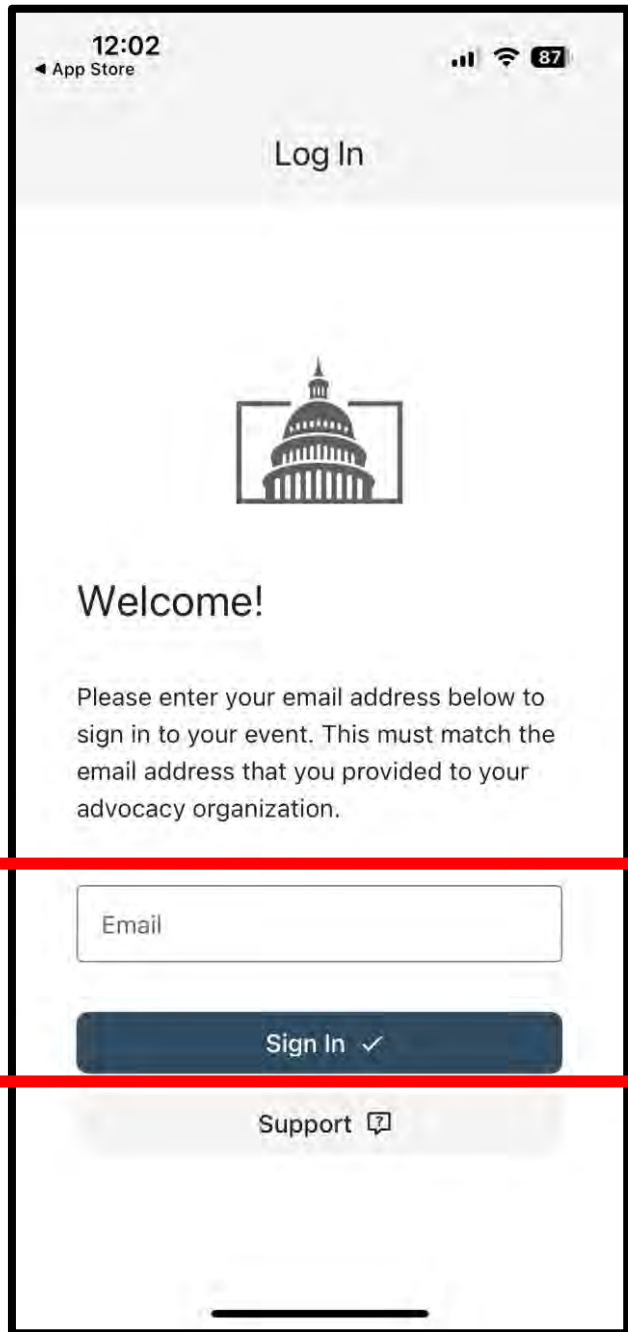


- **Contact us for any technical support**
- **Ensure you have the most up-to-date version**

## When Opening the App

- Select **“Allow”** for notifications
- Select **“Allow While Using App”** for location setting





## Logging In

- Enter your email address that you registered for the event with, then tap “Sign In”



## Logging In

- Enter your email address that you registered for the event with, then tap “Sign In”
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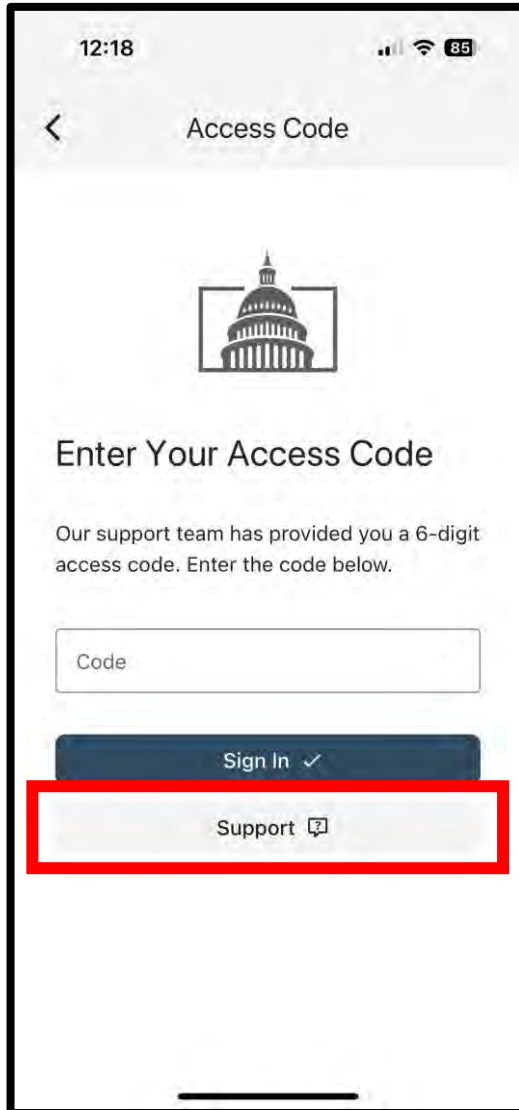
From: **AdvocacyDay**  
<[noreply@advocacyassociates.com](mailto:noreply@advocacyassociates.com)>  
Date: Thu, Oct 31, 2024 at 1:46 PM  
Subject: Your access code is XXXXX  
To: <youremailaddress>

Hello,

Your 6-digit AdvocacyDay access code is XXXXXX

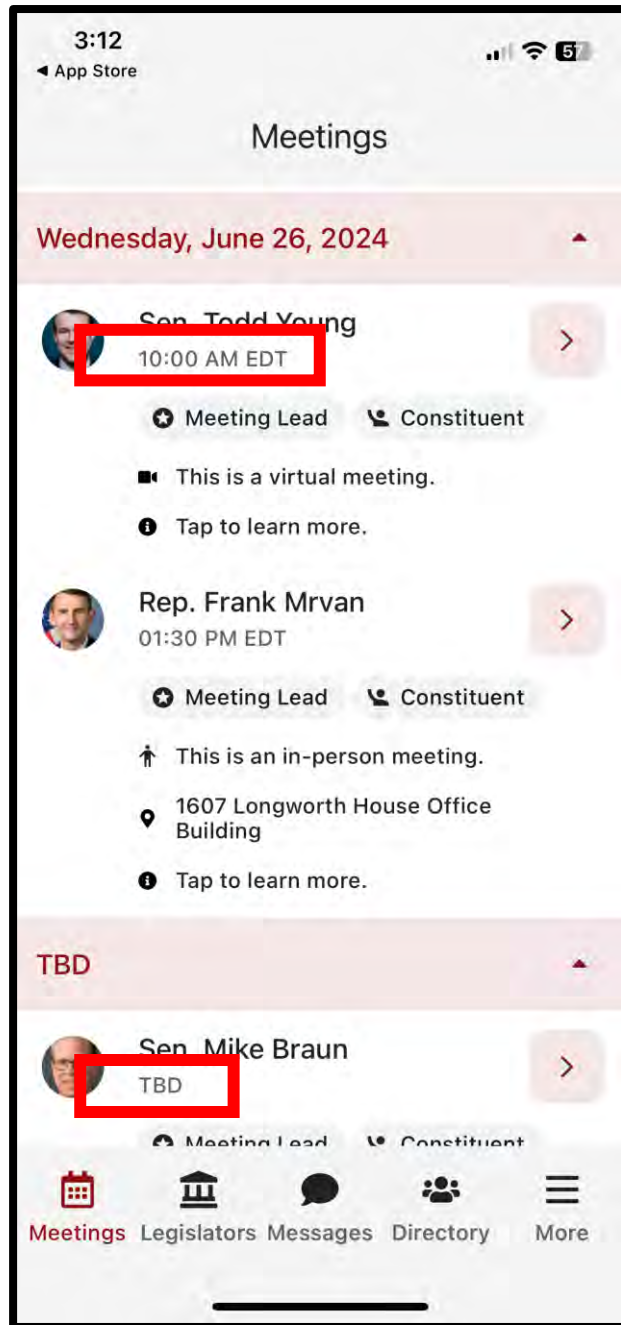
It is valid for 15 minutes.

A screenshot of a mobile app interface for logging in. At the top, the time is 12:18 and the battery is at 85%. The screen title is 'Access Code'. Below the title is a back arrow and a capitol building icon. The main heading is 'Enter Your Access Code'. A message states: 'Our support team has provided you a 6-digit access code. Enter the code below.' There is a text input field labeled 'Code'. Below the field is a dark blue button labeled 'Sign In ✓' and a lighter blue button labeled 'Support 🗨️'. A red arrow from the email screenshot points to the 'Code' input field.



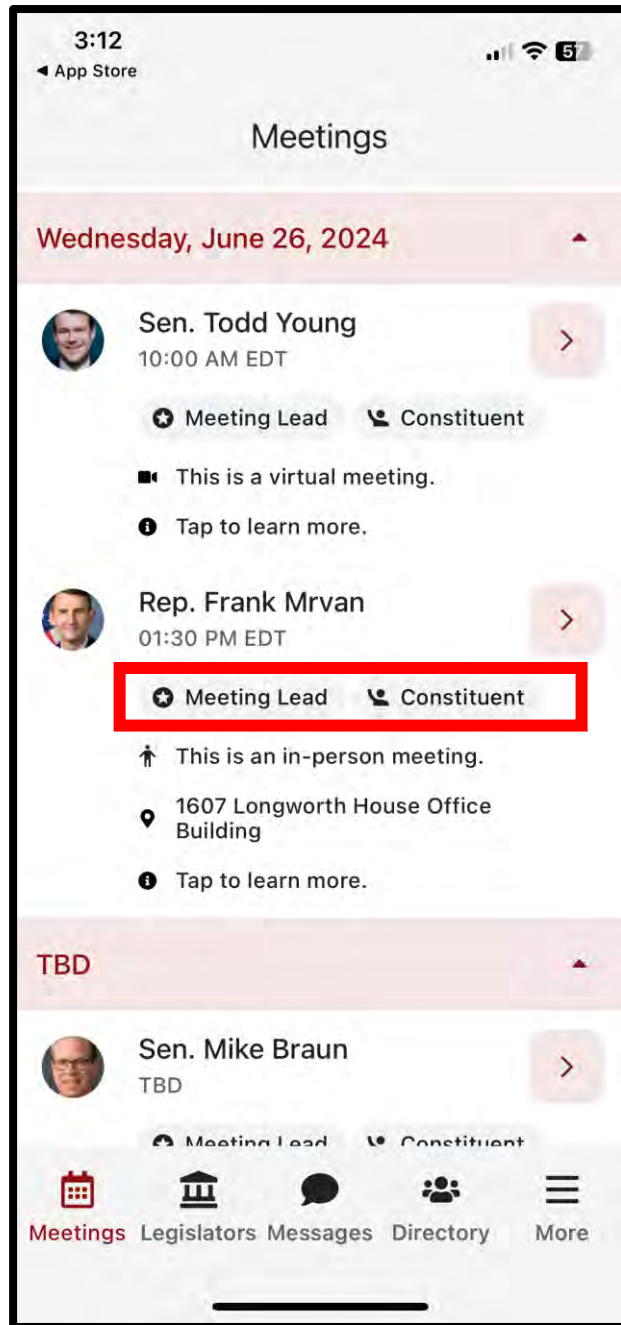
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- **Check your email** for a verification code. Input the code into the app and tap “Sign In”
- **If you don’t receive a code, or experience an error, tap “Support.”** Our team will be reaching out to you shortly



## Main Schedule Page

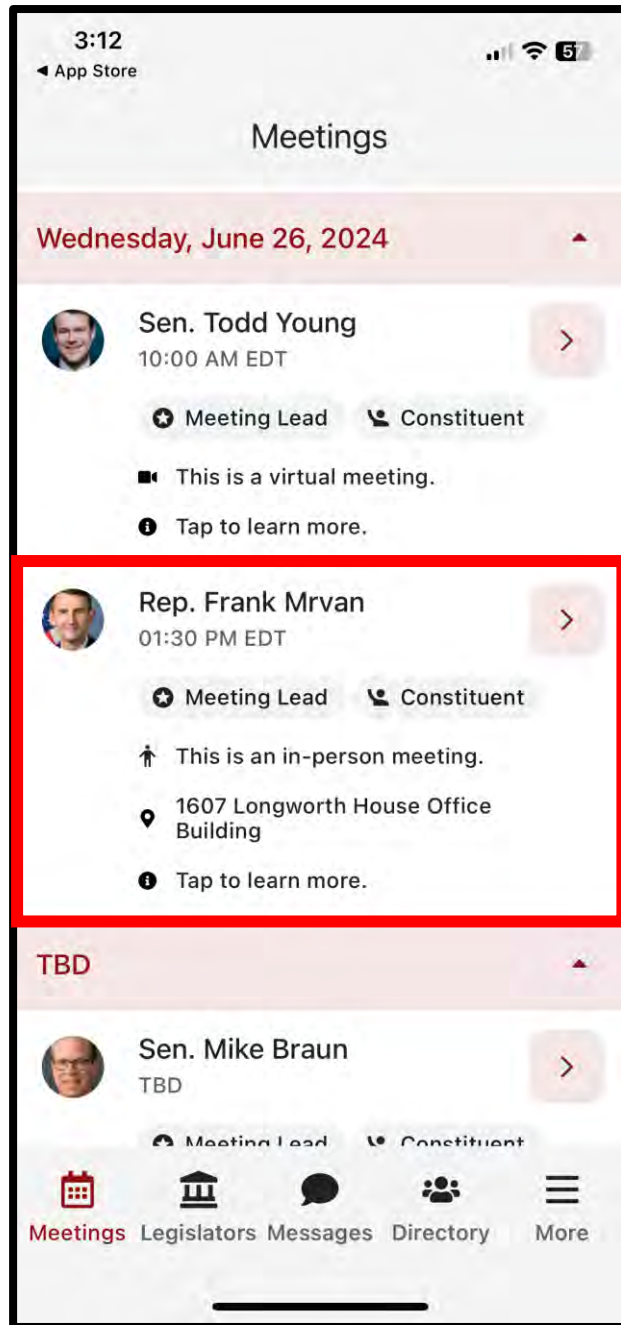
- Confirmed meetings display with a time, pending meetings display as TBD



## Main Schedule Page

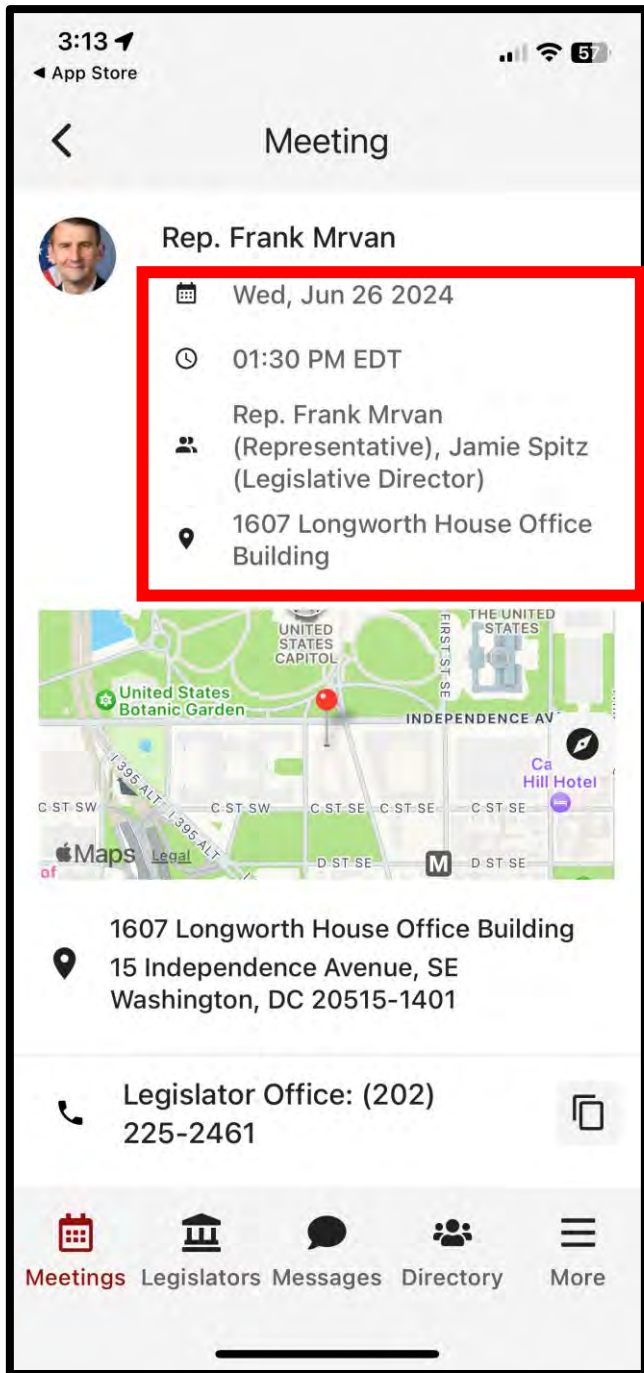
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- All times displayed in time zone you are located in
- Indicates in person or virtual
- Badges indicating if you are a Constituent and/or Meeting Lead for that meeting



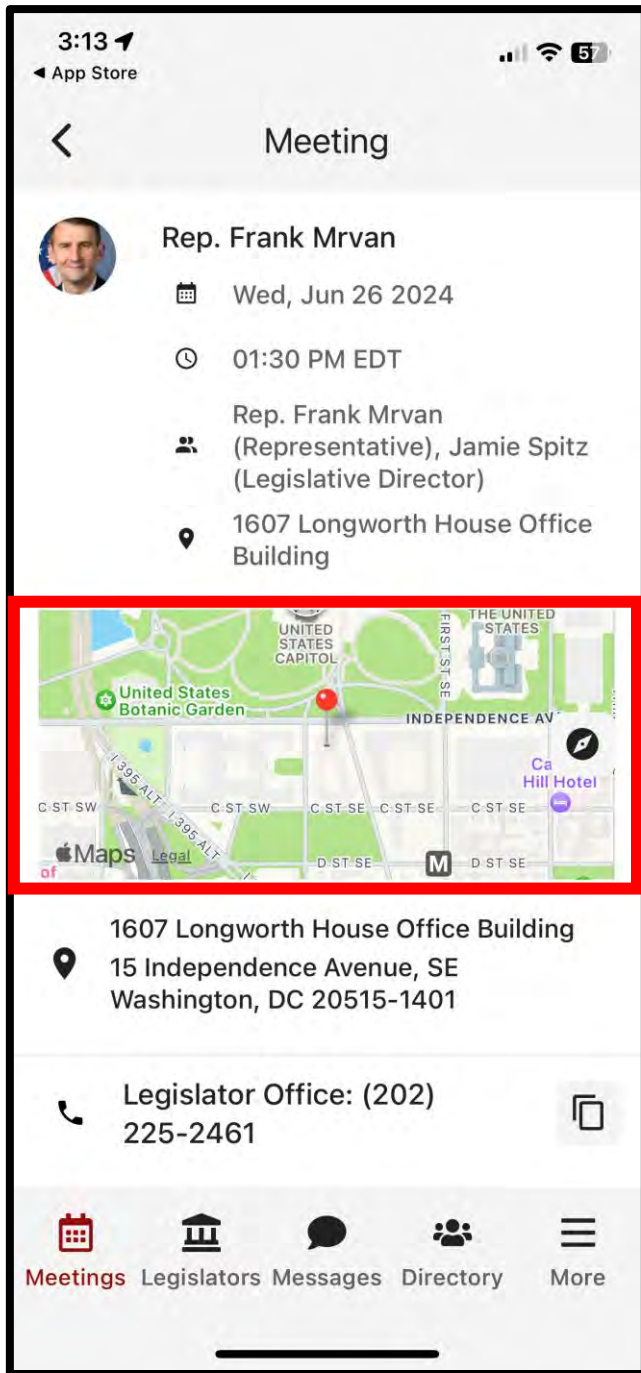


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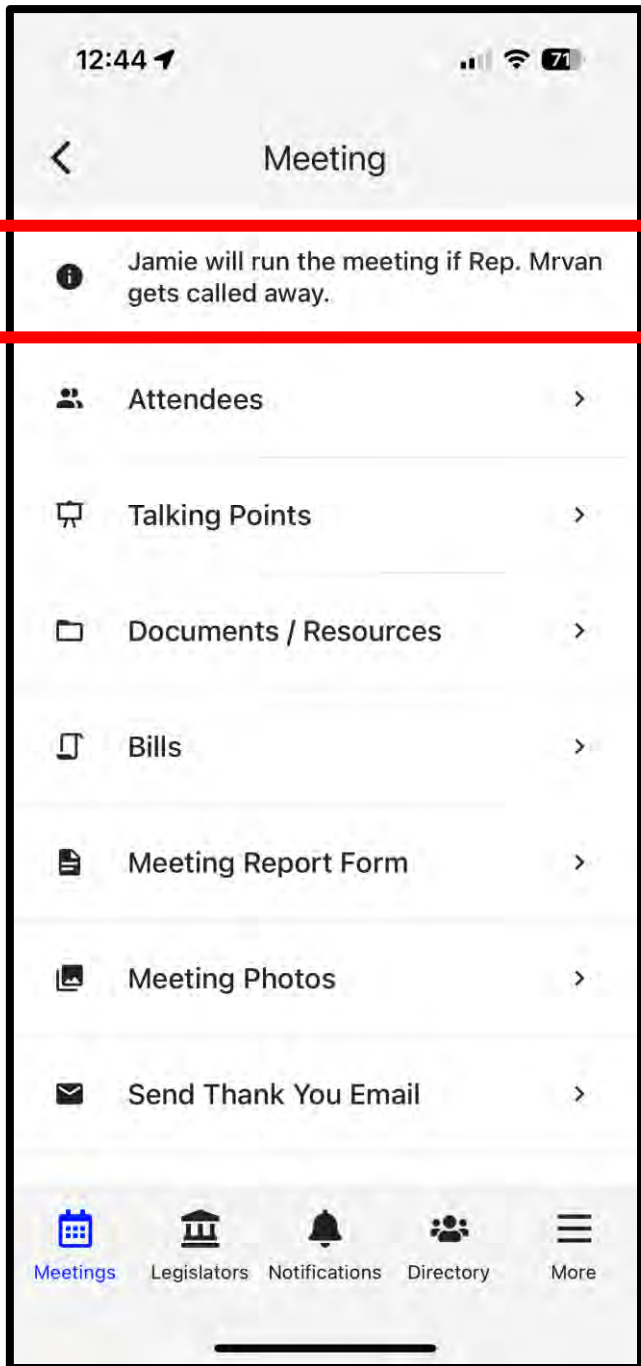
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- Tap anywhere on the meeting to learn more



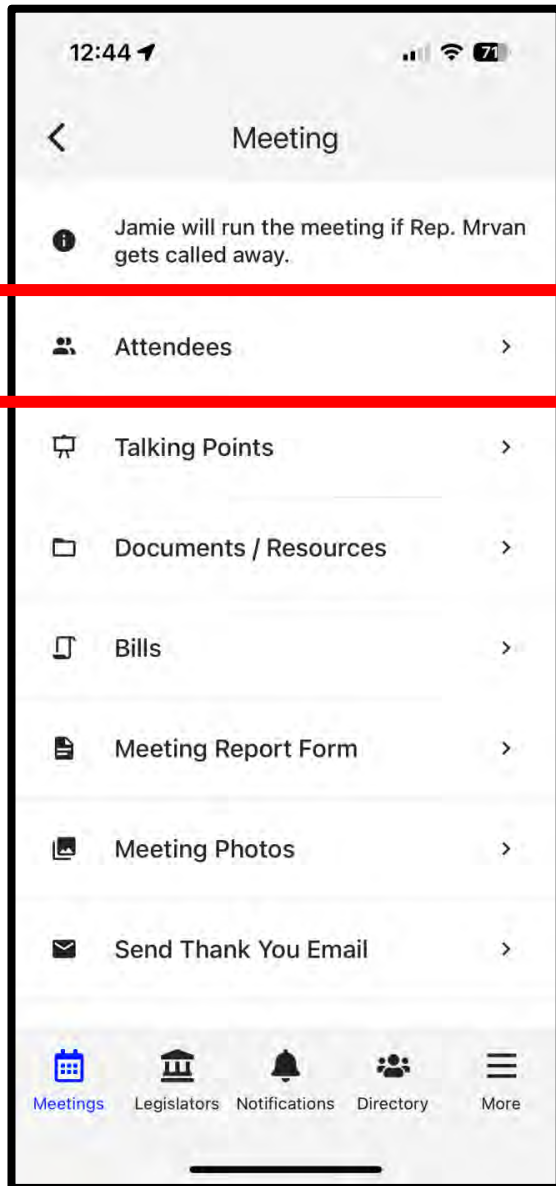
- Date/Time/Meeting With/Location



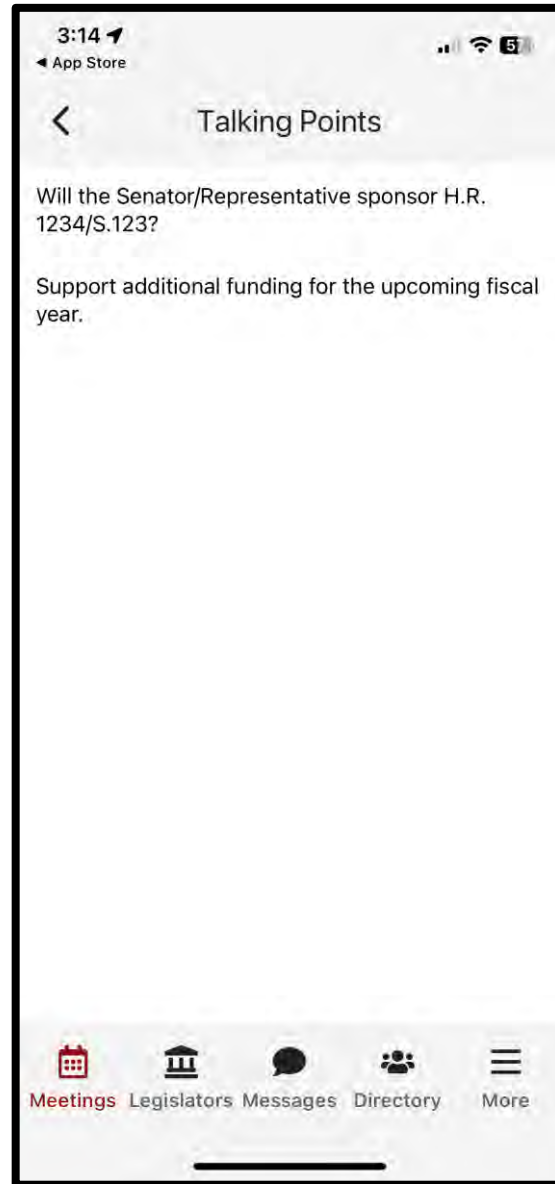
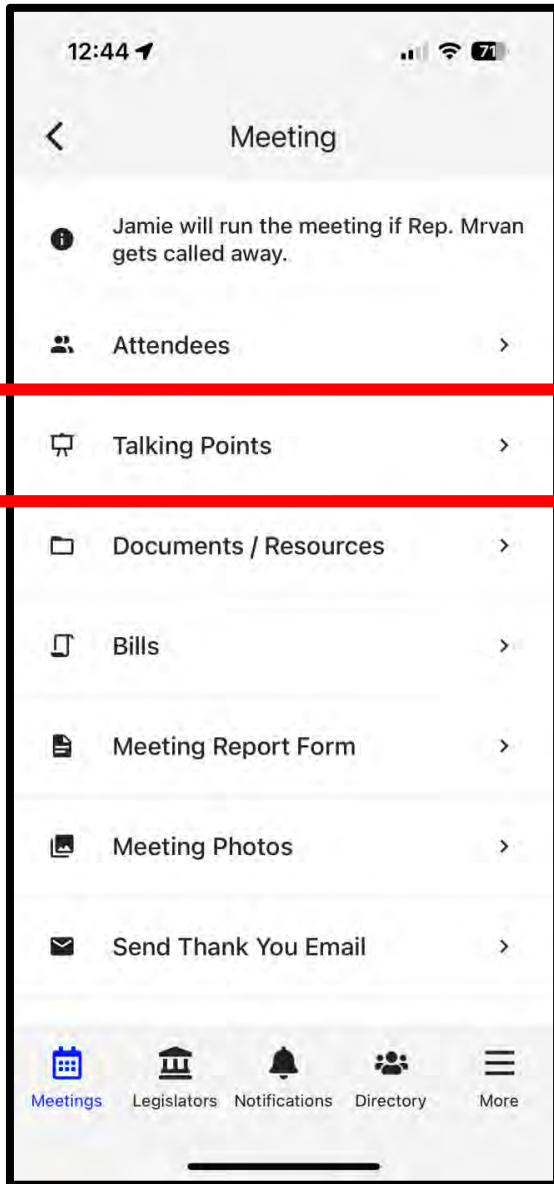
- Date/Time/Meeting With/Location
- Tap on the map to get walking directions to the building



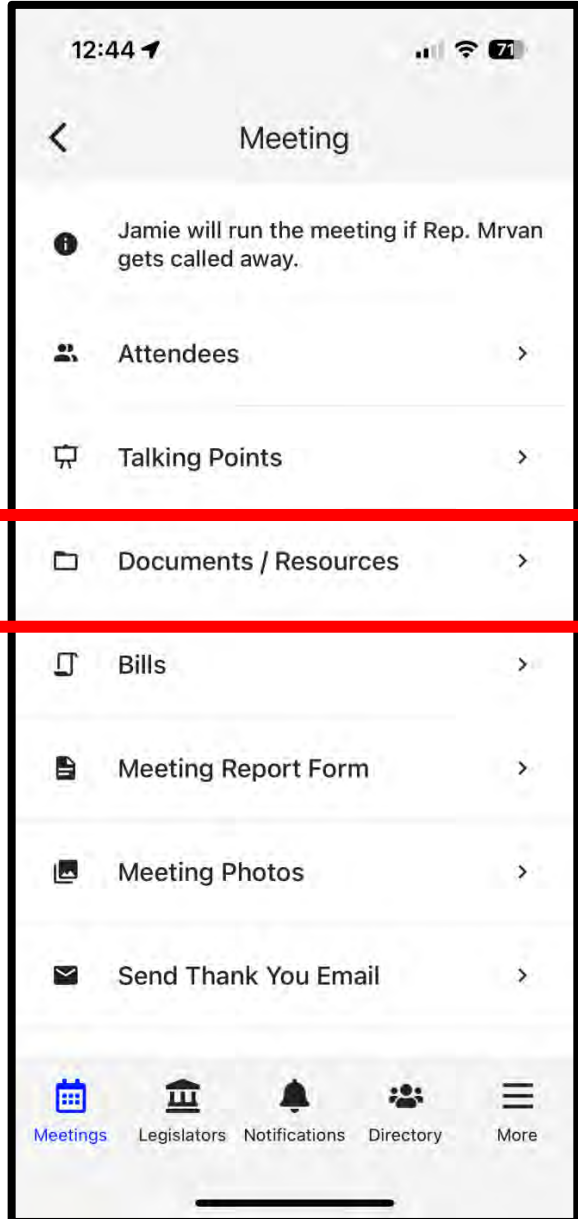
- Date/Time/Meeting With/Location
- Tap on the map to get walking directions to the building
- **Scroll down for any important information**



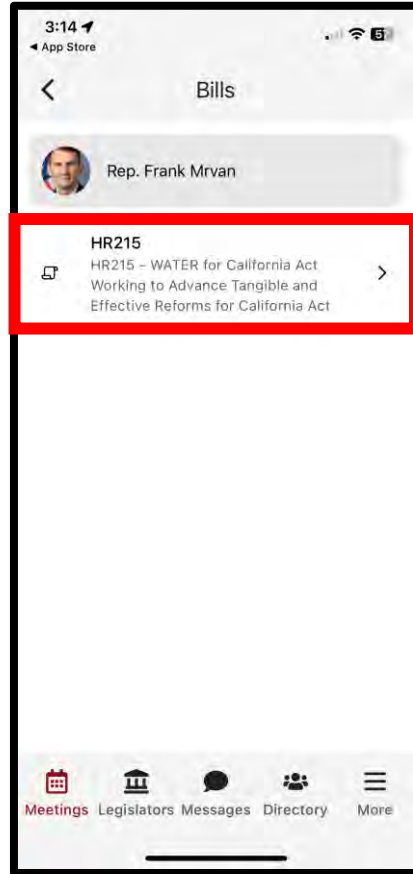
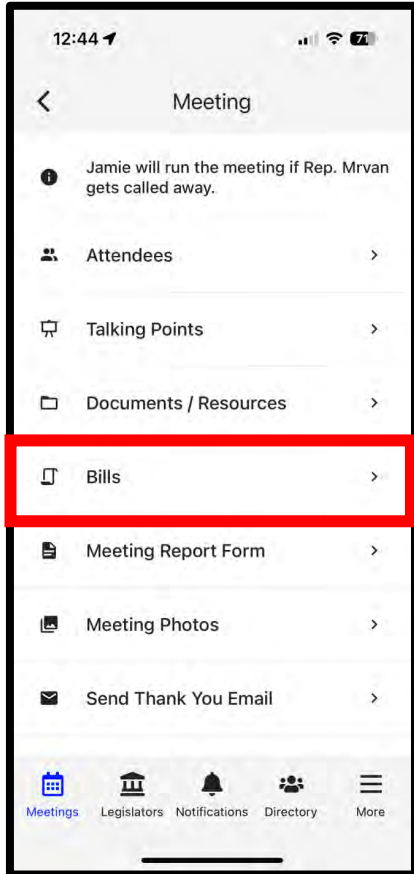
- Date/Time/Meeting With/Location
- Tap on the map to get walking directions to the building
- Scroll down for any important information
- Attendees in the meeting



- Date/Time/Meeting With/Location
- Tap on the map to get walking directions to the building
- Scroll down for any important information
- Attendees in the meeting
- **Talking points**

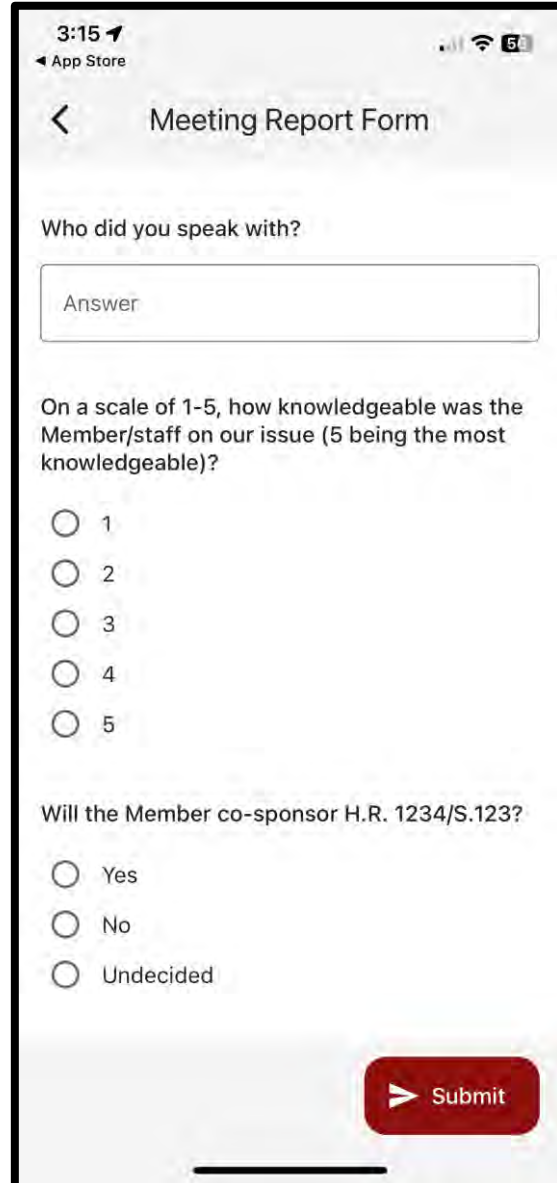
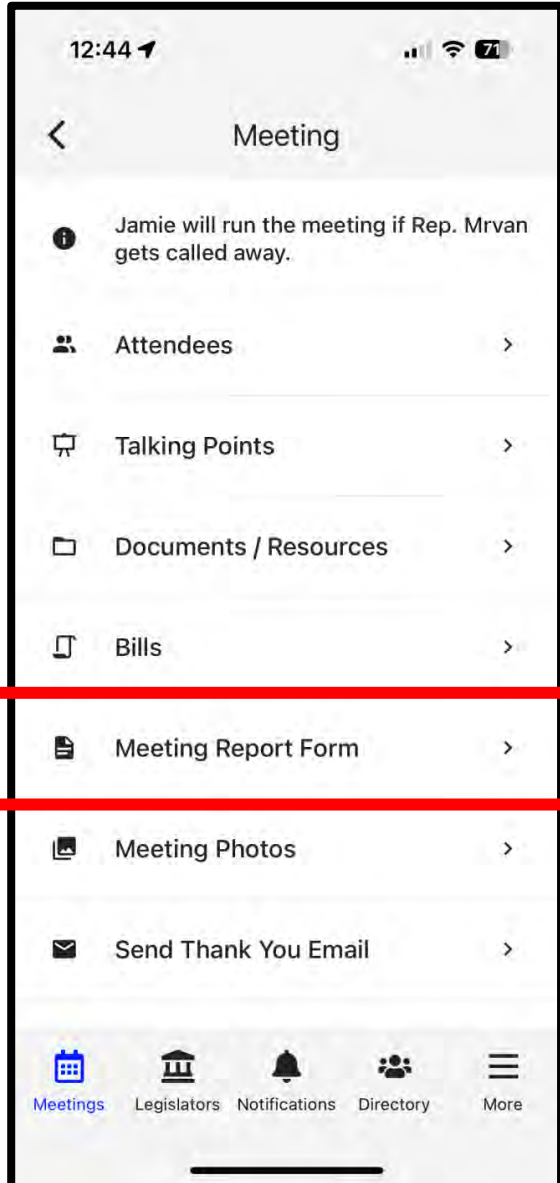


- Date/Time/Meeting With/Location
- Tap on the map to get walking directions to the building
- Scroll down for any important information
- Attendees in the meeting
- Talking points
- **Documents and resources**

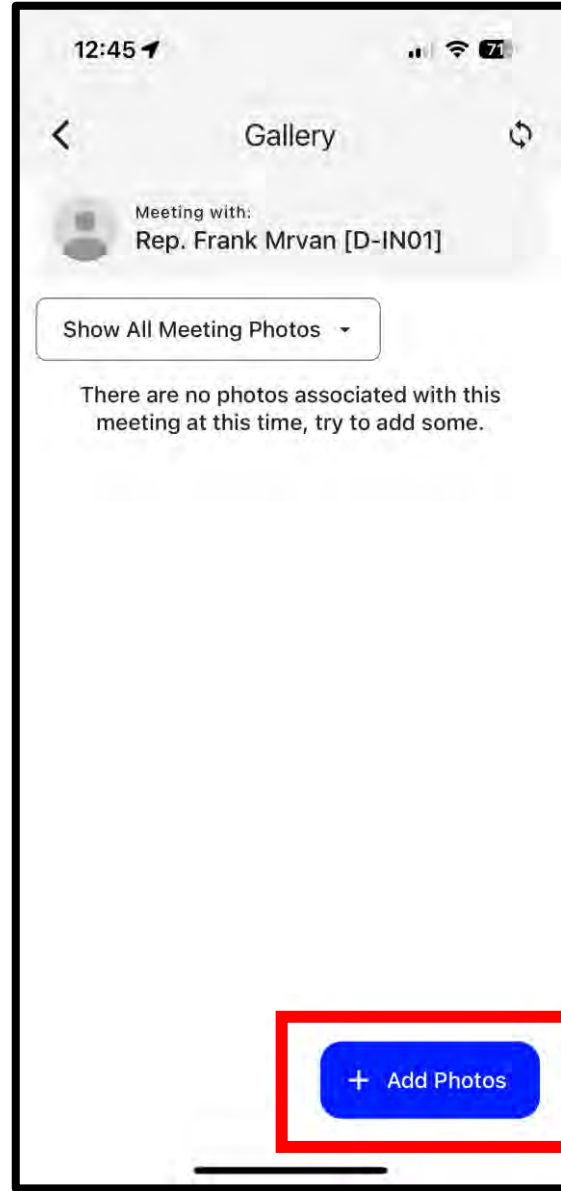
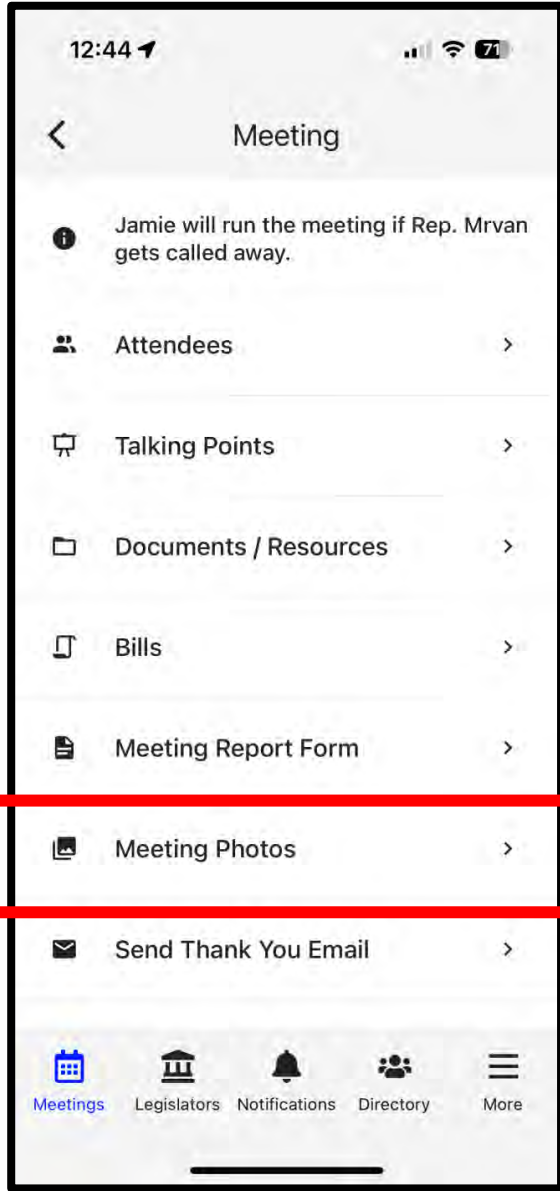


- Date/Time/Meeting With/Location
- Tap on the map to get walking directions to the building
- Scroll down for any important information
- Attendees in the meeting
- Talking points
- Documents and resources
- **Bills**

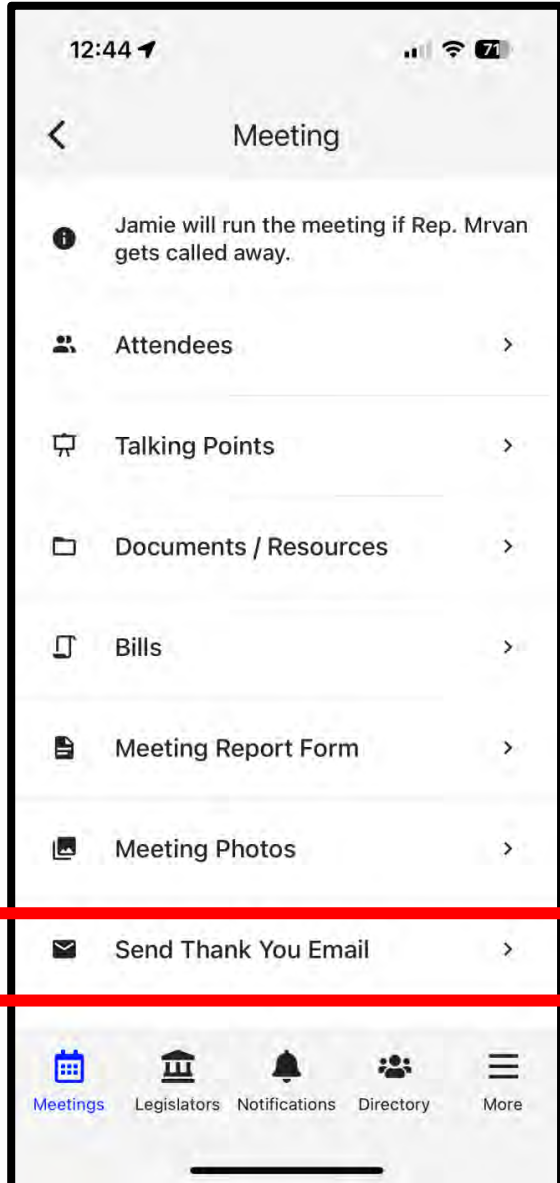




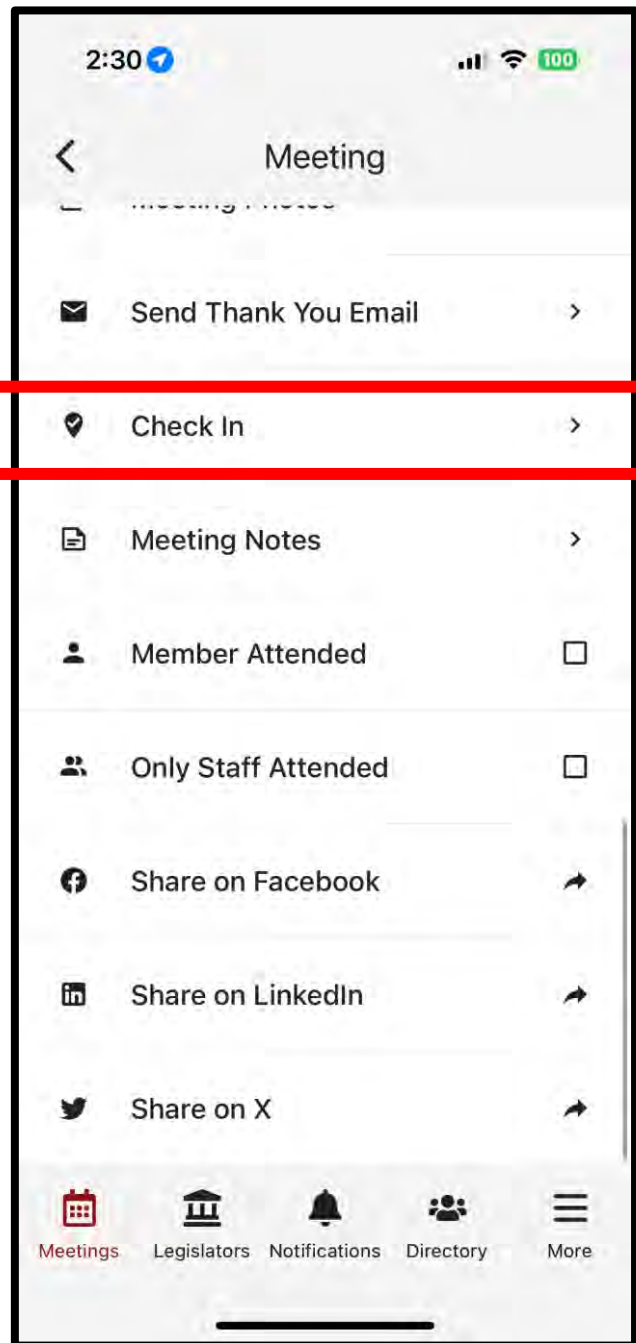
- Date/Time/Meeting With/Location
- Tap on the map to get walking directions to the building
- Scroll down for any important information
- Attendees in the meeting
- Talking points
- Documents and resources
- Bills
- Meeting report form



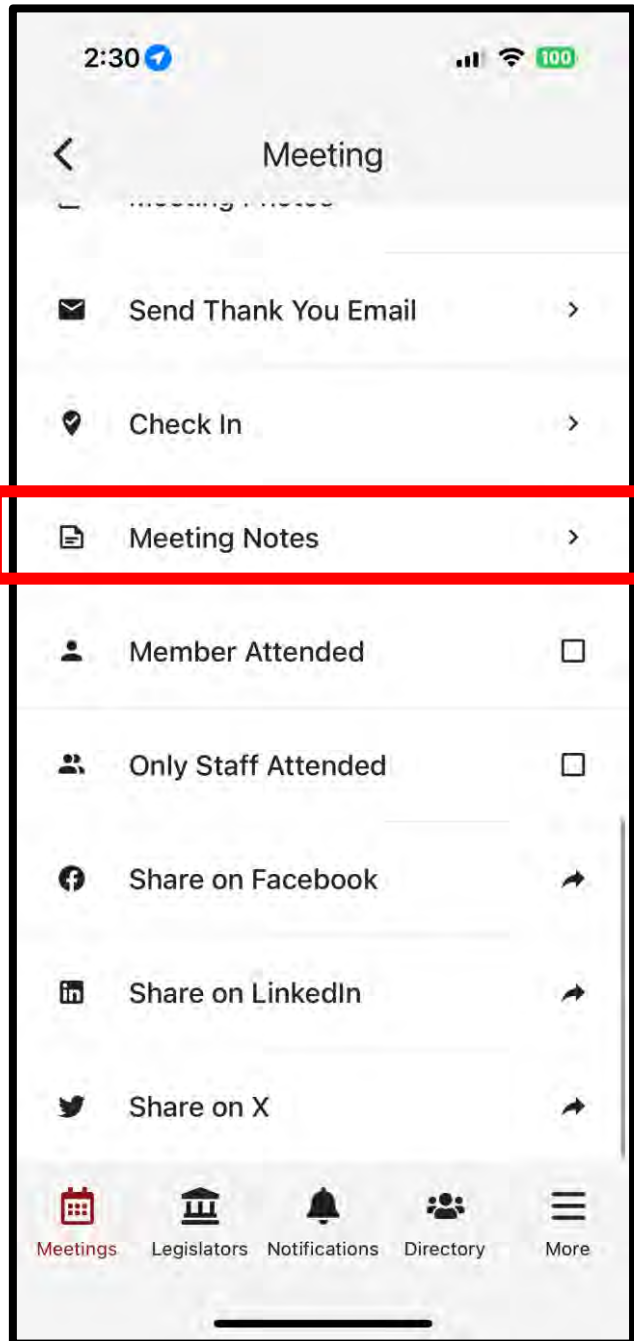
- Date/Time/Meeting With/Location
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- Attendees in the meeting
- Talking points
- Documents and resources
- Bills
- Meeting report form
- **Take or add photos from your meeting**



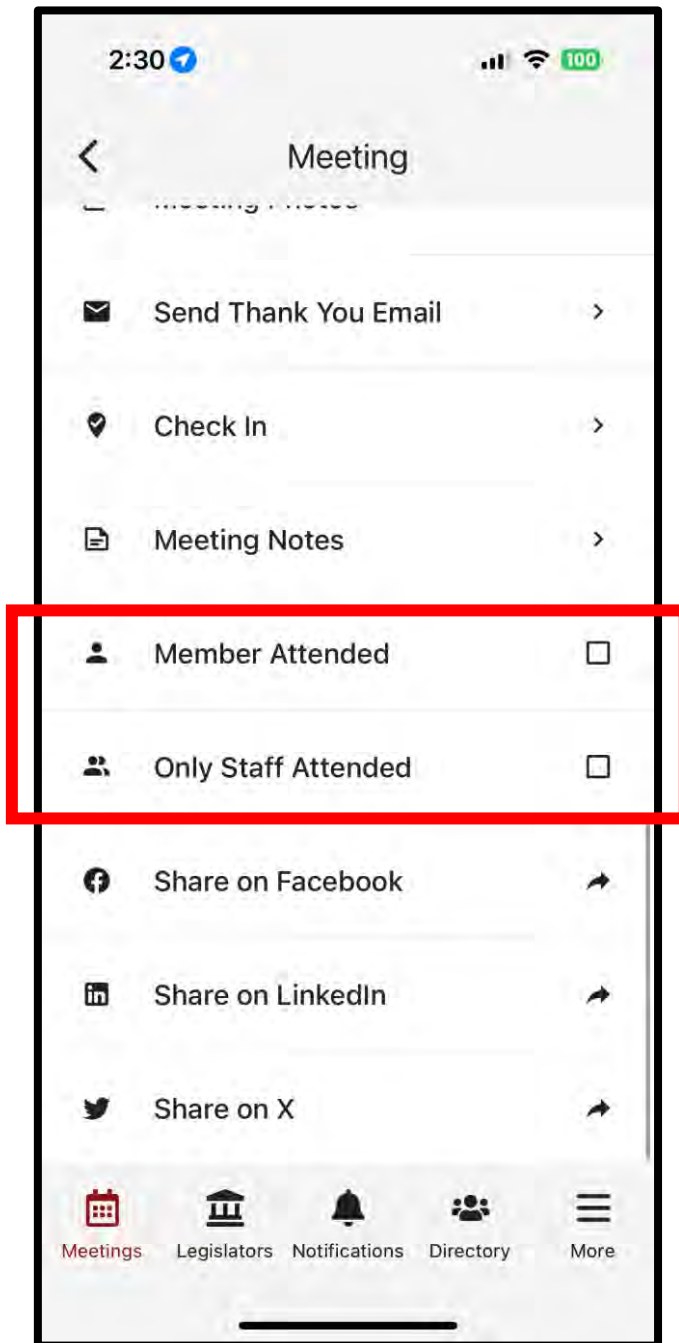
- Thank you email



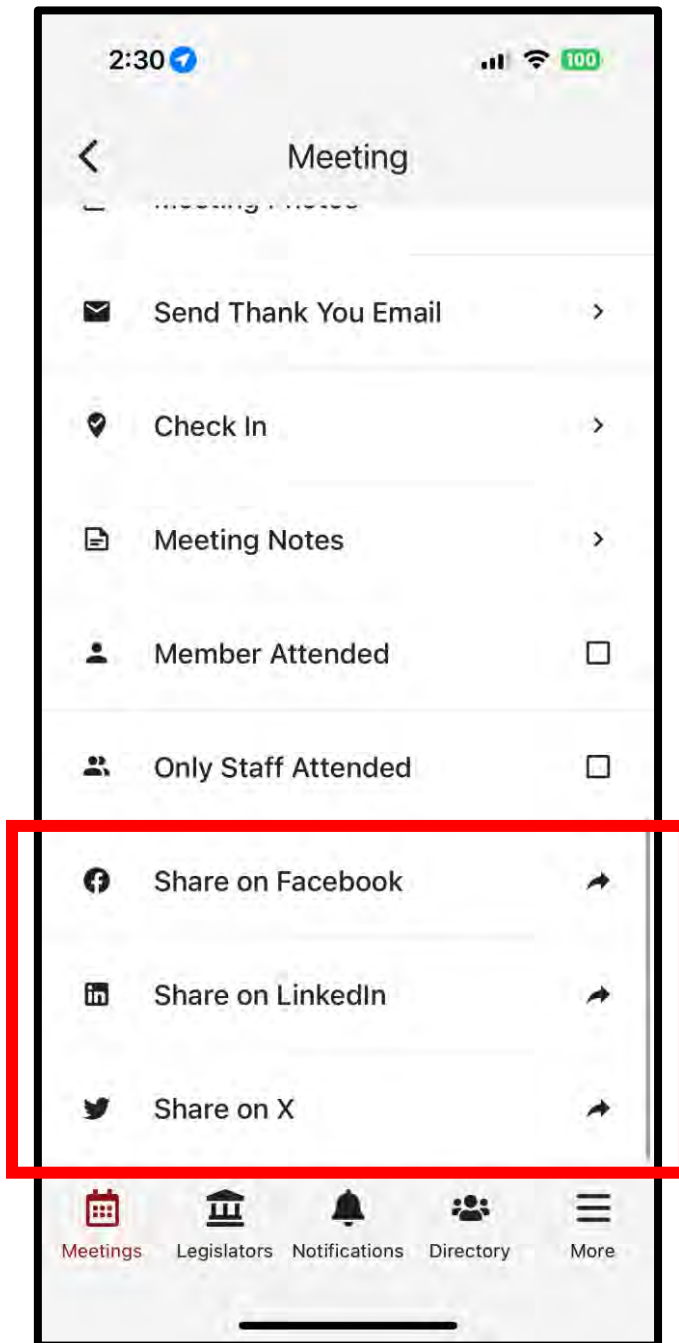
- Thank you email
- Check in to report attendance



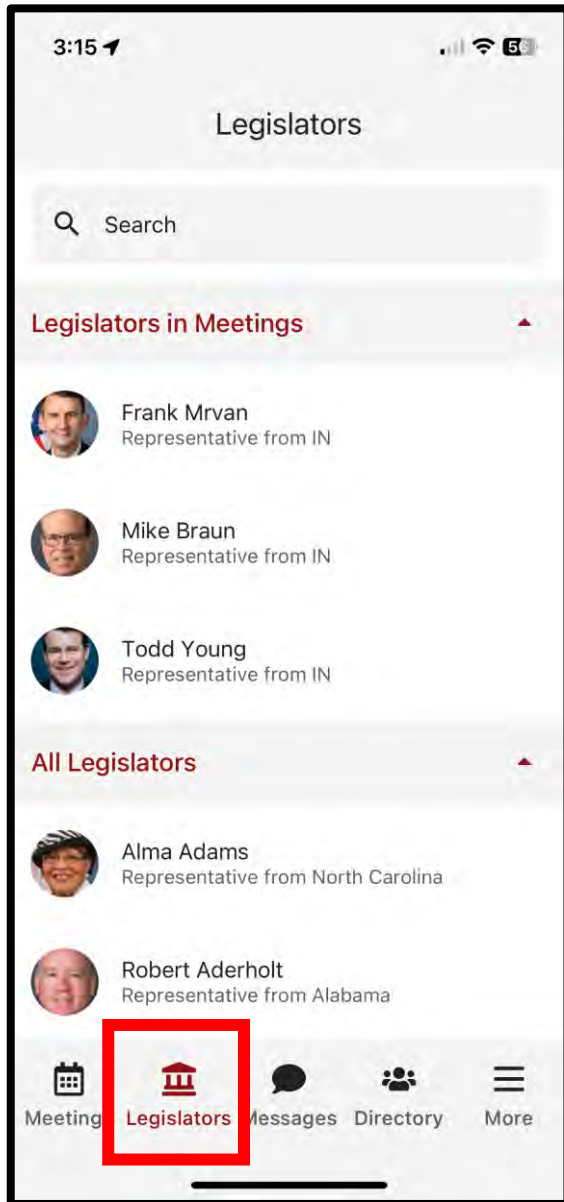
- Thank you email
- Check in to report attendance
- **Take meeting notes**



- Thank you email
- Check in to report attendance
- Take meeting notes
- **Did the Member of Congress attend?**

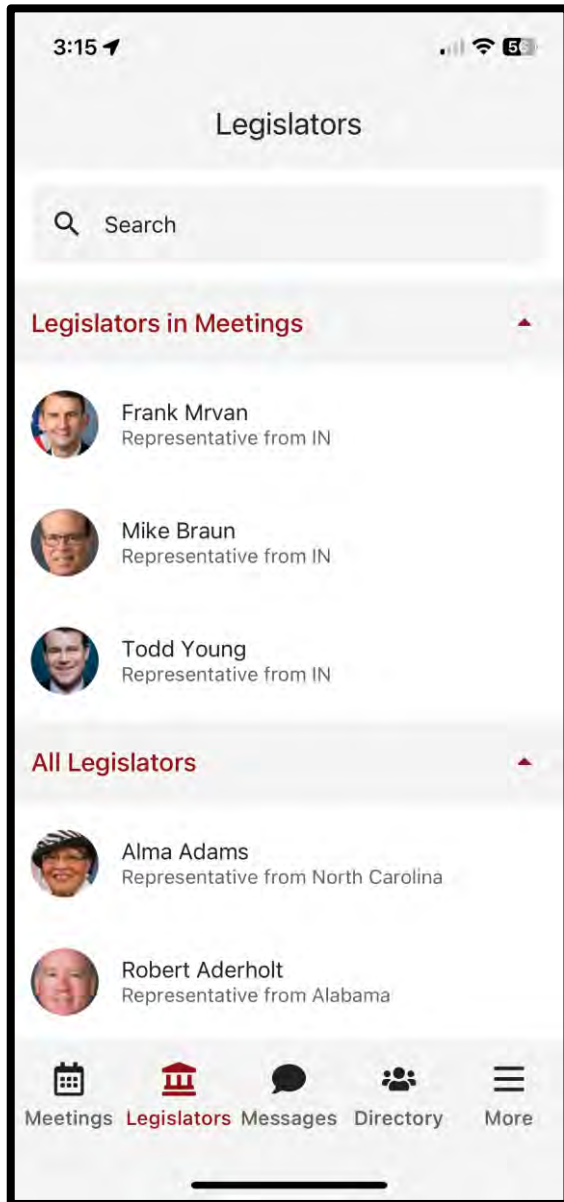


- Thank you email
- Check in to report attendance
- Take meeting notes
- Did the Member of Congress attend?
- **Create a social media post**

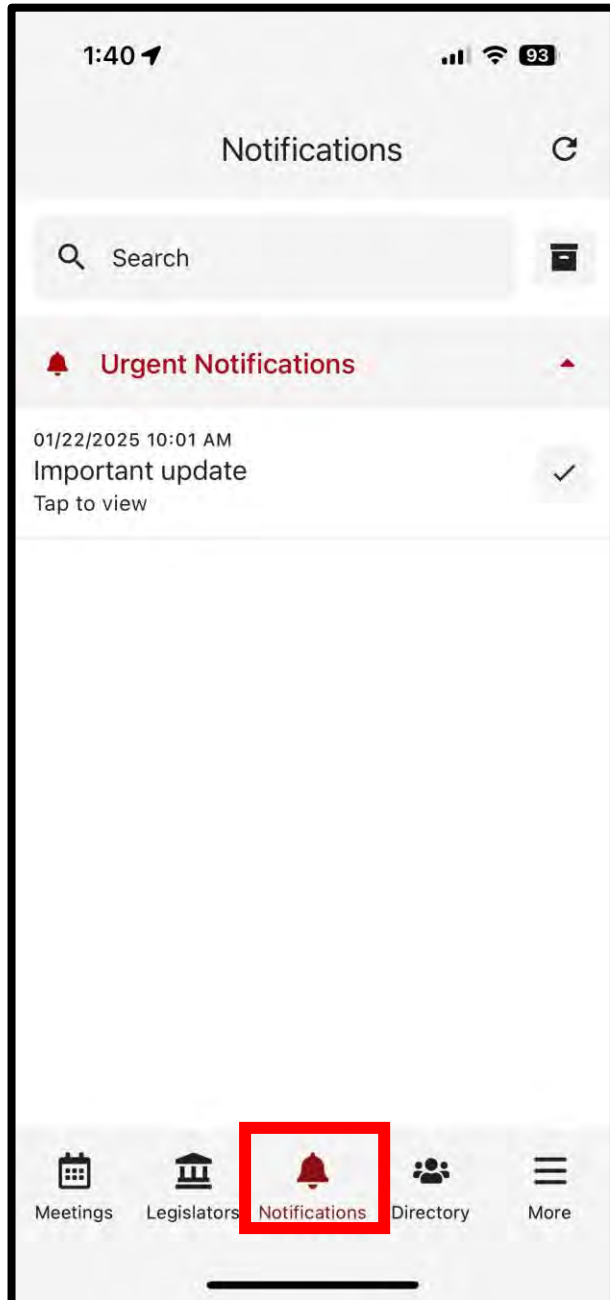


- Legislators tab, tap on each for a biography

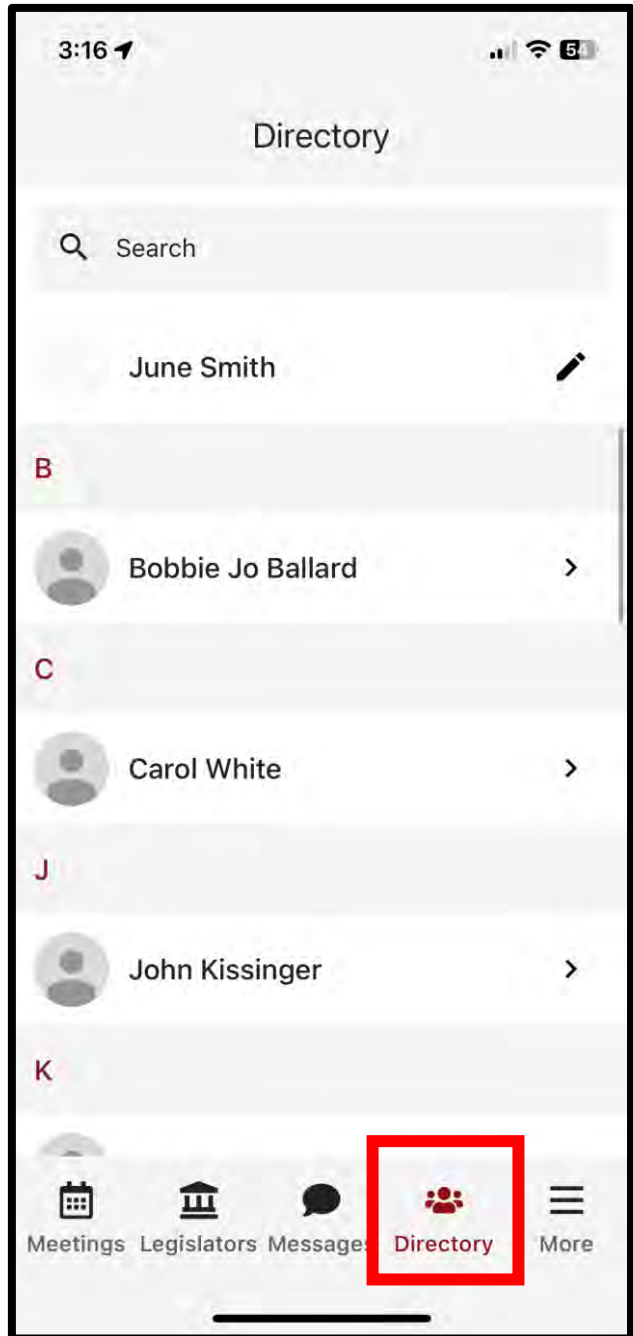




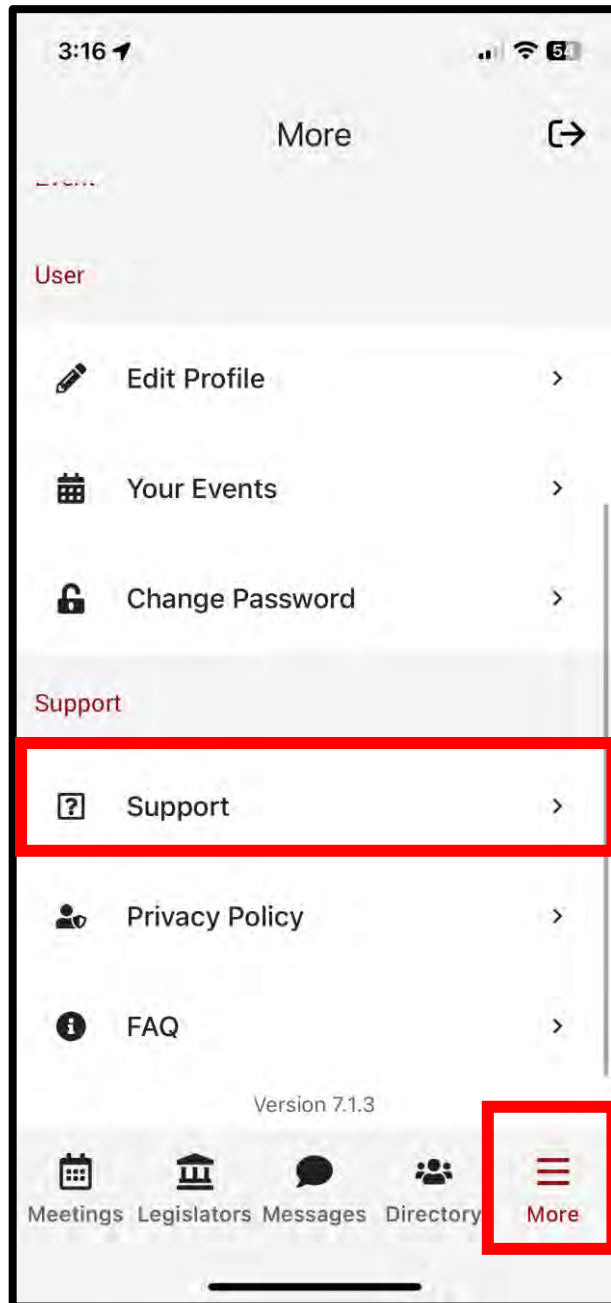
- Legislators tab, tap on each for a biography
- Relevant bills with voting record, committee assignments



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- Messages tab to highlight any updates. You will also receive updates via push notification and email



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- **Directory to look up attendees in your event. Tap to get more information**



- Legislators tab, tap on each for a biography
- Relevant bills with voting record, committee assignments
- Messages tab to highlight any updates. You will also receive updates via push notification and email
- Directory to look up attendees in your event. Tap to get more information
- **More tab for additional resources, importantly all SUPPORT and FAQs**



## **Relevant Information and Reminders**

- Check your **SPAM/JUNK folder** to ensure you didn't miss the initial email (domain is @advocacyassociates.com)
- Give yourself **30 minutes** to get through security and navigate your way to the office
- There will be a help number listed in the **Support** tab to call if you need to get ahold of Advocacy Associates
- Meetings may last anywhere from **15-30 minutes**, prepare your pitch and talking points accordingly. **ASK** how much time the office has
- Any changes to your schedule the day of the event **will be sent to you via push notification and email**. Please be sure to check regularly throughout the day. Updates will also be flagged in the **Messages tab in your app**

May 5-6, 2025  
Washington, DC

# Materials Overview

## 2025 AACAP Asks

- Protect Medicaid to Support Children's Access to Behavioral Health Services
- Promote Medical Mental Health Care to Solve our Nation's Pediatric Mental Health Crisis
- Legislation to Improve Access to Children's Behavioral Health Care

## Policy Briefs

- The Function of Medicaid in Children's Access to Behavioral Health Services
- Improve Access to Children's Behavioral Health Care: Supporting Health Insurance Parity for Mental Health and SUD Treatment
- Psychopharmacology and Children's Mental Health
- Improve Access to Children's Behavioral Health Care: Building a Robust Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Workforce

## Background Information and Documents

- Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists: Experts in Children's Mental Health
- State Workforce Maps
- AACAP Advocacy Toolkit
- Additional Helpful Talking Points
- Psychotropic Medication Talking Points
- Directions to Capitol Hill
- Capitol Hill Map
- House Office Building Map
- Senate Office Building Map
- Where to Eat on Capitol Hill

## Tentative Schedule of Events (all times are in EDT)

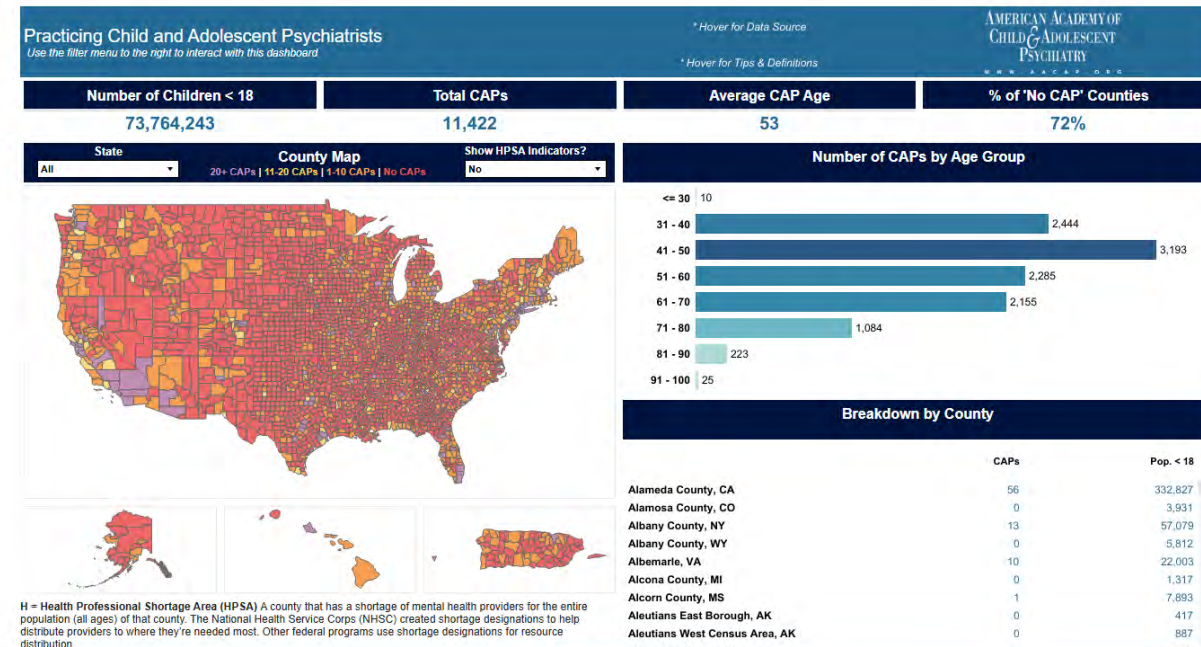
[Full Agenda \(PDF\)](#)

#AACAPLC25



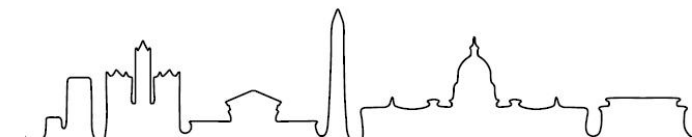
## Workforce Maps by State

AACAP Workforce Maps are best viewed on desktop.



# Additional Details to Note

- Business casual attire appropriate for Monday, May 5, business attire with **comfortable shoes** for Tuesday, May 6 (white coats not needed)
- Allow a few extra minutes to move through Capitol security to enter office buildings
  - Ask Capitol police officers or staff with whom you meet for best way to travel to your next meeting
- Lunch options are available in cafeterias in both House and Senate office buildings
- Bring business cards to leave with Congressional staff.
- Get the Congressional staff's business card so you can send a follow-up note.
- Remember to send a thank you email and serve as a resource to those with whom you meet. Copy [govaffairs@aacap.org](mailto:govaffairs@aacap.org) so that we can follow-up here in DC!
- Some paired state groups will require attendees to join meetings from an additional state
  - No attendee should join a meeting alone
  - 14 family advocates attending meeting along with AACAP members
  - Some meetings will include AACAP staff



# Breakout Rooms

- Please choose the room with your state if attending Leg Con
- Join the room, meet colleagues
- Come up with a 1-2 minute “pitch”
- Identify who will speak during the meetings
- Identify patient stories or practice stories you will bring to DC and share with your Congressional offices
- Feel free to jump off at any time and we look forward to seeing you on May 5 and 6 for the 2025 AACAP Legislative Conference!

