

How to Effectively Support AA Bills to Legislators

In communicating with legislators, the most effective means of getting your message across is make it short and truthful. In supporting AA legislation, your message should contain something personal but facts are the key element.

HOW SHOULD CONTACT BE MADE: If you are a constituent, you have the right to direct access to the legislator. This means that you should call the legislators office and speak directly to him or to her. Phone numbers are listed on individual state's legislature website or, for U.S. congressional legislators, go to the United States Senate website to find your two state Senators and to the United States House of Representatives website to find your state district Representative.

Usually a secretary or assistant will answer the phone first. Let this person know that you are a registered voter in that legislator's district and that you would like to talk to him or her directly about a piece of legislation currently being considered.

If the legislator is not available to speak to you then, they will call you back.

They are your public servant and their contact with voters is critical to their re-election.

If you do not hear back from them within a day or two, attempt one more phone call before sending an email.

If you are not a constituent, send an email to legislators. Email addresses can be found for each legislator on individual state's legislature website, and often there is a mechanism by which to email all legislators with a single email message. State legislative websites can easily be found by Googling "(State's name here) State Legislature".

WHAT TO SAY: In the subject line of your email, either indicate that this email is thanking the person for supporting (House bill and its number and/or Senate bill and its number) or asking for support of (House bill and its number and/or Senate bill and its number). *SPONSORS OF A BILL SHOULD ONLY BE THANKED FOR THEIR SUPPORT.* Be polite in your email. If you have some personal connection with that state, (e.g. you grew up in that state, attended college or graduate school, or have family members there, etc.), be sure to include this.

Let the legislators know that the potential for you to return to or possible desire to move to that state is not feasible since AAs cannot currently work there.

Include your personal educational background and the fact that you had to fulfill a pre-medical curriculum as well as completing your bachelor's degree. Also state that you had to take either the MCAT or the GRE (or both) in order to apply to AA school. In addition, indicate that since AAs practice in the Anesthesia Care Team approach where an anesthesiologist must be involved in the care of the patient receiving anesthesia that AAs advocate the highest level of patient safety. You should also mention that there is a shortage of all anesthesia providers in the entire nation and that many jobs for CRNA positions in that state are listed on the Internet and in anesthesia publications.

Form emails are non-effective and this is why it is asked that you personalize your own emails. Again, keep them polite and to-the-point; too much information loses the reader's interest. Most of all, be sure that you respectfully start each email with "Dear Representative _____," or Dear Senator _____".

Below is an excellent email format taken from an email sent by an AA student during the North Carolina AA licensing effort:

Dear Representative _____ ,

I am writing you this email communication to gain your support for HB ____ (Anesthesiologist Assistant Licensure) in _____. I am a resident of _____ County in _____ and currently in _____ finishing Anesthesia Assistant program at _____ University. I want to return to _____ and practice as an Anesthesiologist Assistant to help support my state and patients, and I hope that you and your colleagues can help individual like me to come back home and advance our healthcare.

Listed below are few of the facts that you should consider when evaluating this bill:

1. A disproportionate number of nurse anesthetists are expected to retire over the next decade, continuing the current shortage in mid-level anesthesia providers. The shortage is further exacerbated by rapidly growing demands for increased surgical services and an aging population. If not addressed, the shortage could affect patient access to anesthesia care in _____ .
2. AAs are highly trained allied health professionals with a proven track record of providing safe anesthesia services
3. AAs are licensed in many states, including South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. As the national shortage of anesthesia providers has increased in recent years, more states have opted to license AAs to provide another anesthesia physician extender to meet the growing demand for surgical services.
4. AAs have a strong track record of providing safe anesthesia care to patients.
 - A University Hospitals of Cleveland internal audit show that there is no difference in patient outcomes between anesthesia care provided by an AA and a nurse anesthetist (CRNA) .
 - AAs are recognized for reimbursement by federal health care programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, and Tricare.
 - There is no difference in medical liability insurance rates between AAs and nurse anesthetists.

All in all, I hope that I have shared with you many reasons why providing licensure to AAs would be beneficial to the patients, our state, and healthcare. I am counting on you for your support, and please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide you more information.

Sincerely,

(Your Name Here)

(Your email address or phone contact information here)