

## Ending Forced Arbitration: Practical Tips for Lobbying Congress on the FAIR Act

Lobbying for the Forced Arbitration Injustice Repeal Act (FAIR Act, H.R. 963/S. 505) is a critical part of NELA's advocacy efforts on behalf of workers. Your personal contact with lawmakers demonstrates the significance of the issue and provides an opportunity to hear—and address—their questions or concerns. Check out our Links and Resources document for useful websites, lists, and other resources.

We encourage you to call, or if possible, visit your U.S. Senator or Representative to build these important legislative relationships and make NELA's and your position clear.

### Schedule A Meeting With Your Member Of Congress

Plan to reach out two or three weeks before you want to meet with your member of Congress. If you have a personal relationship with your member of Congress, their Chief of Staff, or their Legislative Director, start with the person you know! If you call an office to request a meeting, please note that college interns are often the staff tasked with answering the phones, and they will often be unfamiliar with pending legislation and generally will not be able to discuss a member's position on a particular bill.

#### How To Request a Meeting Via Email:

1. If you don't have a personal contact, reach out to the member's Chief of Staff.
  - List of House Chiefs of Staff
  - List of Senate Chiefs of Staff
2. Include a short introduction with your name, the fact that you are lobbying as an attorney and as a NELA member, your home zip code, and your phone number.
3. If there is something you can thank the Member for, be sure to do so! Of course, if your member is already a co-sponsor of the FAIR Act, start with thanking them for that.
4. Ask the Chief of Staff to provide the name and email address of the staffer in their office who handles Judiciary Committee matters, and in particular, the FAIR Act.
5. Email the Judiciary staffer and request a meeting to discuss the FAIR Act.

### What Should I Say At My Meeting?

If you are choosing between reaching out to staff of the in-District office or in Washington, DC, you should know that the in-District staffers are typically experts in constituent services issues; reaching someone at the IRS, handling a military or Social Security issue, etc. Staff in Washington, DC are typically policy experts. Either way, the typical meeting will last 20–30 minutes. Plan your talking points with that timeframe in mind. Find out in advance of the meeting whether your member of Congress has co-sponsored the FAIR Act.

- Thank them for meeting with you, and share a little bit about NELA, yourself, and your law practice.
- **If they support the bill**, thank them, and let them know you will be checking in periodically to see how you can help.
- **If your legislator is opposed or still thinking it over**, find out what their key concerns are, and ask if there is information that you might be able to provide? It could be data or an issue brief, or it could be that they want to hear from other constituents.

- Let them know that you and NELA (and your Affiliate if true) strongly support the FAIR Act and why it's important. Talking with Congressional offices demands that you strike a balance—do provide stories or data that are compelling, and that the member or staffer can connect with **but keep it short**.
  - FAIR Act Talking Points
- Ask questions of the staffer about their member's views and concerns. The information you get will help NELA to better strategize our advocacy.
- It's great to leave with a plan to follow up. Whether you offer to check in later after the staffer has talked to the Member of Congress to see if they will sign on as a co-sponsor, or the staffer asks for information you don't have, always look for an opportunity to follow up.

**A few members of Congress and a number of staffers have deep expertise on forced arbitration, but many do not. Regardless of their level of expertise, all**, members and staffers rely heavily on the expertise of people like you to educate themselves about emerging issues. Focus on the FAIR Act Talking Points that you think will resonate with your member. You can also share the Background Document, or The Institute publications included in the Toolkit.

### Tip: Never, Ever Leave A Meeting Without Making An Ask

Before leaving a meeting with a staffer, be sure to state clearly and unambiguously what you want. You may be asking the staffer to convey our thanks to the member for their support, or you may be asking the staffer to let the member know that you want and urge them to support the legislation. Tell them what action you want them to take. **Be specific**. Emphasize the result we want with every point: "For this reason, we hope the Senator will co-sponsor the bill," or, "This is another reason the Senator should support the bill." Saying that you wanted the Member to know your thoughts about this issue is not an ask.

### Follow-Up

Follow-up within one to two weeks with a thank you. Also, be sure to follow up if you offered additional information. Feel free to share the About NELA document, the Background Document or other publications included in the FAIR Act Toolkit. Other options for follow-up:

- Provide them with more information about forced arbitration as well as your clients' stories about the impact of forced arbitration. Try to share information about how this occurs in an industry or sector in their state or district.
- You can offer to have other constituents who also support the FAIR Act contact the member's office to express their support.
- If they are not currently a co-sponsor, tell them you will check back again to find out more about the member's concerns. Ask when it would be reasonable to contact them again.

### Report Back To NELA

Let us know how your meeting went. Keeping track of our lobbying efforts is key to making progress on issues important to workers' rights. Report the outcome of your meeting using our online form or by sending an email to [advocacy@nelahq.org](mailto:advocacy@nelahq.org).