



Public policy at all levels of government can have a direct impact on your core business, or that of the startups you work with. While policymakers generally want to do the right thing for their communities, many policymakers lack a full understanding of the startup ecosystem. Accordingly, engaging with policymakers is important to promoting an environment conducive to technology entrepreneurship. This guide walks through steps to strategically engage policymakers at the federal-level for issue advocacy.

### Step 1: Prioritize

- Multiple policies are likely to be impacting your business or startup ecosystem.
- Order them by impact and urgency, and decide which issues to engage on.

### Step 2: Investigate

- Learn which ordinances, orders, or laws apply to the issue. Is your issue handled at the local, state, or at the federal level?
- At the federal level, determine which [federal agency](#) or committee in the [House](#) and/or [Senate](#) handles your policy area of concern.
- Identify any [existing legislation](#) pertaining to your issue. Is there a policymaker particularly engaged on the issue?

### Step 3: Target

- If the policy concern is a federal issue, decide if you want to engage directly with an agency, including through comment periods, or through a lawmaker.
- Determine which [federal agency](#), [Representative](#), [Senator](#), or relevant [House](#) and [Senate](#) Committee to contact by phone, email letter, or public comment.

### Step 4: Engage

- Seek out national advocacy groups, like Engine, who organize [events](#) to facilitate startup engagement with policymakers, and can provide additional direction if you need it.
- Contact your local startup support organization to identify any other engaged startups and work with them to build out your efforts.
- Engage with the pertinent Representative, Senator, or staff. Attend their office hours or contact their office to schedule a one-on-one meeting.
- Remember that the policymaker might have staff that works on the issue, but policymakers and their staff are not necessarily experts and you may need to educate them on an issue.
- When meeting with a policymaker, go in with an agenda, know what your ask is, talk about how you fit into the community, and use concrete examples about how the issue impacts your and others' businesses.
- Submit comments to be included in the Congressional Record following a hearing, and [comments to federal agencies](#) following rulemakings.

### Step 5: Follow Up

- After your meeting, follow up thanking them and reminding them of the issue. Continue the relationship by making yourself available to engage further on the topic.
- Advocacy doesn't stop after a successful meeting—it can take months, or years, for a bill to become law. Even if a law is successfully created or changed, agencies often issue regulations as laws are implemented.