
Organic Week 2024 Advocacy Day

May 7, 2024

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Organic
trade association™
SINCE 1985



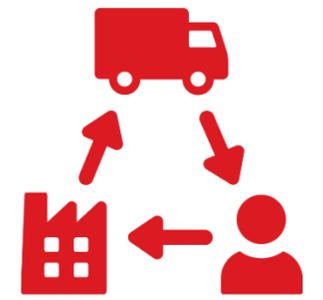
AGENDA FOR TODAY

Hill Visits 101

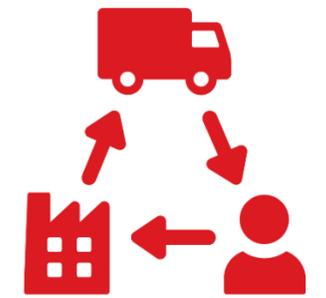
Talking Points and Policy Asks

Advocacy Day App Training

Questions?



HILL VISITS 101



WHY GO TO THE HILL?

- To share your story – why you choose organic and how it affects your business, farmers in your supply chain, consumers and your community.
- To ask policymakers to support initiatives that **promote, protect, and grow** the **ORGANIC** sector.
- To make an impact on behalf of the industry and represent OTA before decision makers.

CRAFTING YOUR STORY FOR THE HILL

Making personal connections to policy goals is crucial:

- Review the Organic Trade Association's **Talking Points** and think about how they relate to you and your business.
- Your footprint is a great start – Location? How many employees and/or facilities do you have? What's your annual sales or revenue? Relationships with co-manufacturers or ingredient suppliers in their district?
- Put those elements together: Connect your organization to OTA and show how the policies we are talking about impact you and your business.
- Bring it back to **the policymaker's district/state**. Why should they care about organic? What does organic have to offer their community?

Key Reminders

- **Share Your Story** – Members of Congress listen first and foremost to their constituents.
- The most effective message is a concrete, tangible example that frames the issue and provides real-world perspective.
- Keep it simple, concise, relevant, and on message – keep tangents and company specific issues to a minimum.



KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE



In General

- ✓ Get a sense of what the staff you're meeting with knows about organic – if not much, start with the basics.
- ✓ Tie your asks to the Member's district or state – consider mentioning how much organic is in their district/state, how many employees/operations you have in their district/state, etc.

Tailor Your Message

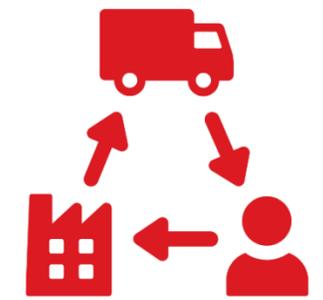
- ✓ **Democrats:** focus on climate smart attributes of organic, importance of federal investment in agriculture, rural economic vitality
- ✓ **Republicans:** focus on business aspects of organic, job creation, price premiums for farmers, voluntary program, consumer choice

Stay on Topic

- ✓ Never argue with Members and staff. Be respectful and if there is tension, shift to other discussion topics
- ✓ Your story and narrative should explain why organic matters – and these policies matter
- ✓ Let OTA Staff follow up on particulars – detail interactions in the Advocacy Day App



High Level Talking Points



Organic is...

- ✓ A strong and growing industry
- ✓ Protecting the environment
- ✓ Good for farmers, good for families, good for rural communities & economies
- ✓ Present in your district!

What we're asking for...

- Support organic in the Farm Bill and through appropriations
- Join the House Organic Caucus
- Learn how organic is present in your district or state



FARM BILL 101

What is the Farm Bill and why does it matter?

The Farm Bill sets the agenda for agriculture policy, USDA priorities and spending levels

Congress drafts and passes a Farm Bill every five years (give or take) - both the House and Senate Agriculture Committees have released frameworks for a 2024 Farm Bill

How we support organic in the Farm Bill:

- ✓ Funding and resources for development and infrastructure (OMD)
- ✓ Reforms and improvements to the program (CIAO)
- ✓ Research and data funding and application (Dairy Data)
- ✓ Continued support for organic research and other programs

The 2018 FARM BILL

Organic Funding:

- NOP up to \$24M in annual funding
- **OREI receives permanent baseline funding** more than doubling to \$50M per year
- ODI maintains funding of \$5M
- NOP receives \$5M in funding for technology upgrades to create **electronic organic import certificates** to deter fraud
- OCCSP maintains funding at \$40M
- Raises the payment limit for projects funded under EQIP OI from \$80K to \$140K

The Organic Farmer and Consumer Protection Act

- Increased authority for USDA to conduct global oversight and enforcement actions to combat fraud in organic
- Required USDA to issue new regulations closing loopholes for certain handlers that are exempt from certification including brokers and shippers
- Resulted in the Strengthening Organic Enforcement final rule

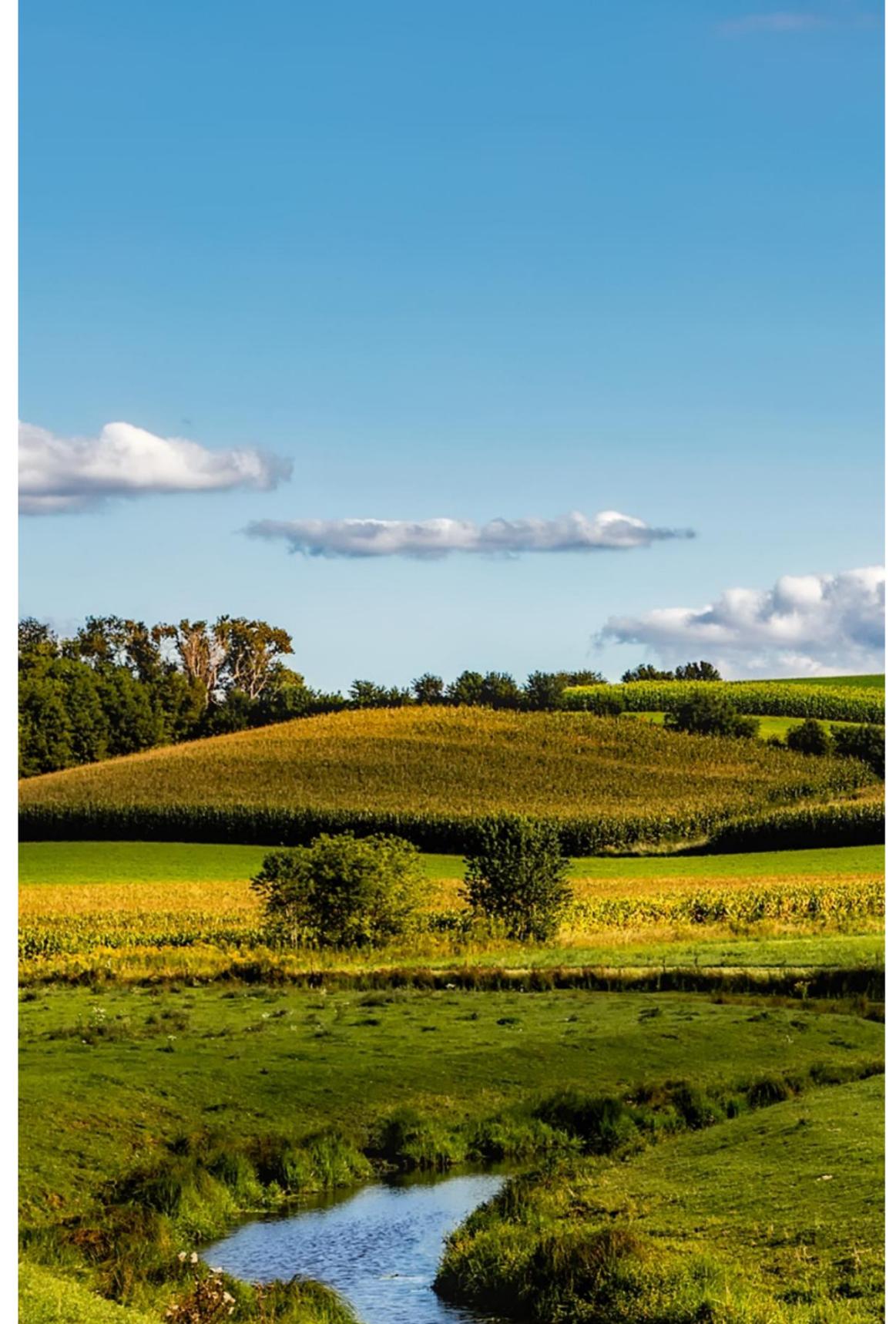
House Farm Bill Framework

- Five-page framework has been released
- Bill "continues support for organic production through the National Organic Program, Organic Production and Market Data Initiative, and National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program"
- Committee mark-up scheduled for May 23

Senate: The Rural Prosperity and Food Security Act

- Authorizes \$50 million annually for organic market development grants
- Incorporates pieces of CIAO bill to improve NOP rulemaking process
- Directs Secretary to improve the collection of organic dairy market data
- Includes other organic priorities related to research, cost-share, and technical assistance

Let's dig in more on the specifics...



Organic Market Development Act

The USDA Organic Market Development Grant program was rolled out in 2023 - \$218 million in applications were received for \$75 million of available funding

Grants strengthen the domestic organic supply chain by investing in infrastructure that enables organic farmers to process their products and reach consumers

The Asks:

- In the House – cosponsor H.R. 5763; advocate for inclusion in Farm Bill
- In the Senate – cosponsor S. 2936; glad to see this included in Farm Bill Framework



Continuous Improvement and Accountability in Organic Act

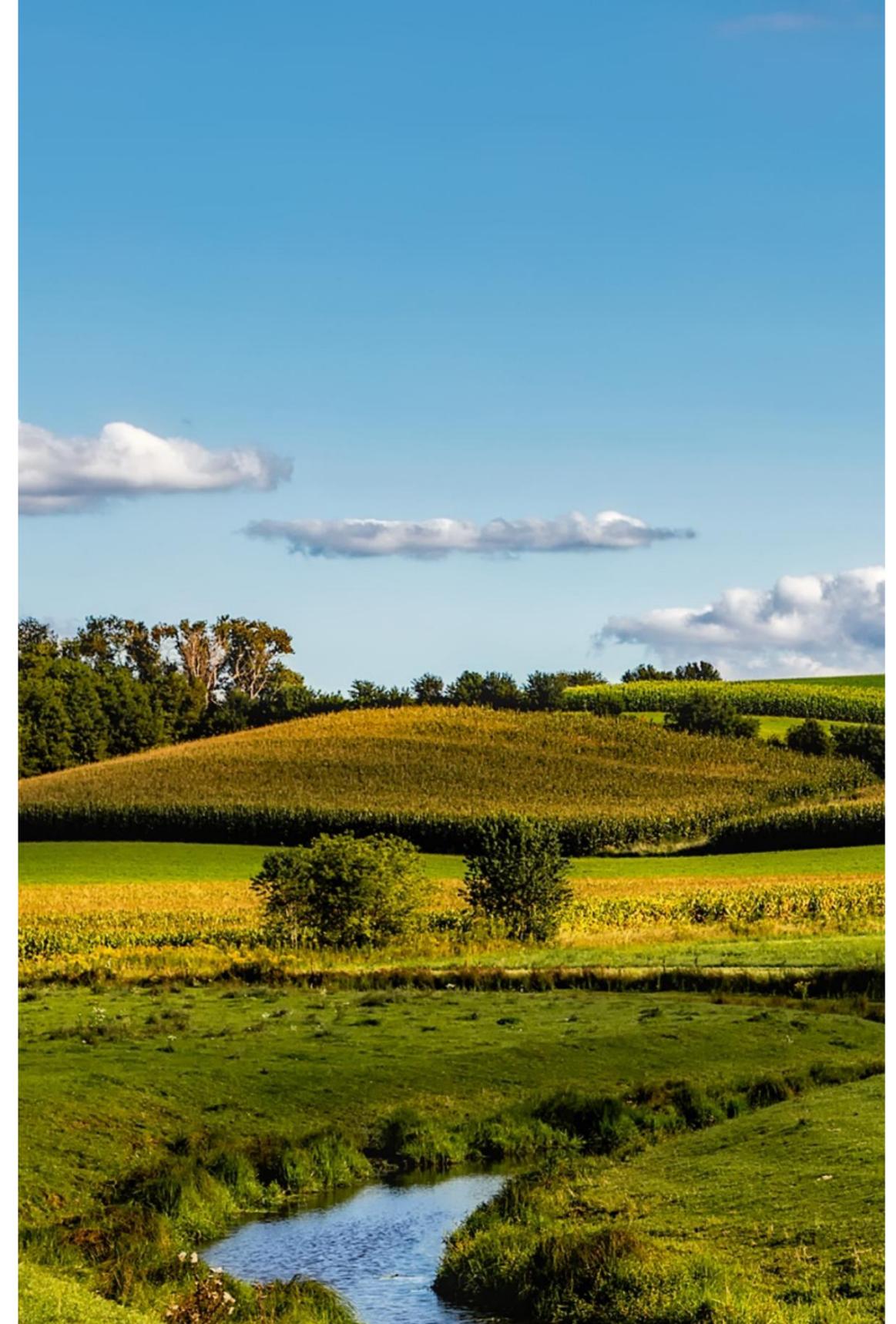
This bipartisan, no-cost bill is broadly supported across the organic sector. It creates predictability and transparency in organic rulemaking to maintain and improve organic integrity.

The bill provides multiple avenues for stakeholder input and feedback during rulemaking.

Works with USDA to reach alignment.

The Asks:

- In the House – cosponsor H.R. 5973
- In the Senate – we support the pieces of CIAO contained within the Rural Prosperity and Food Security Act



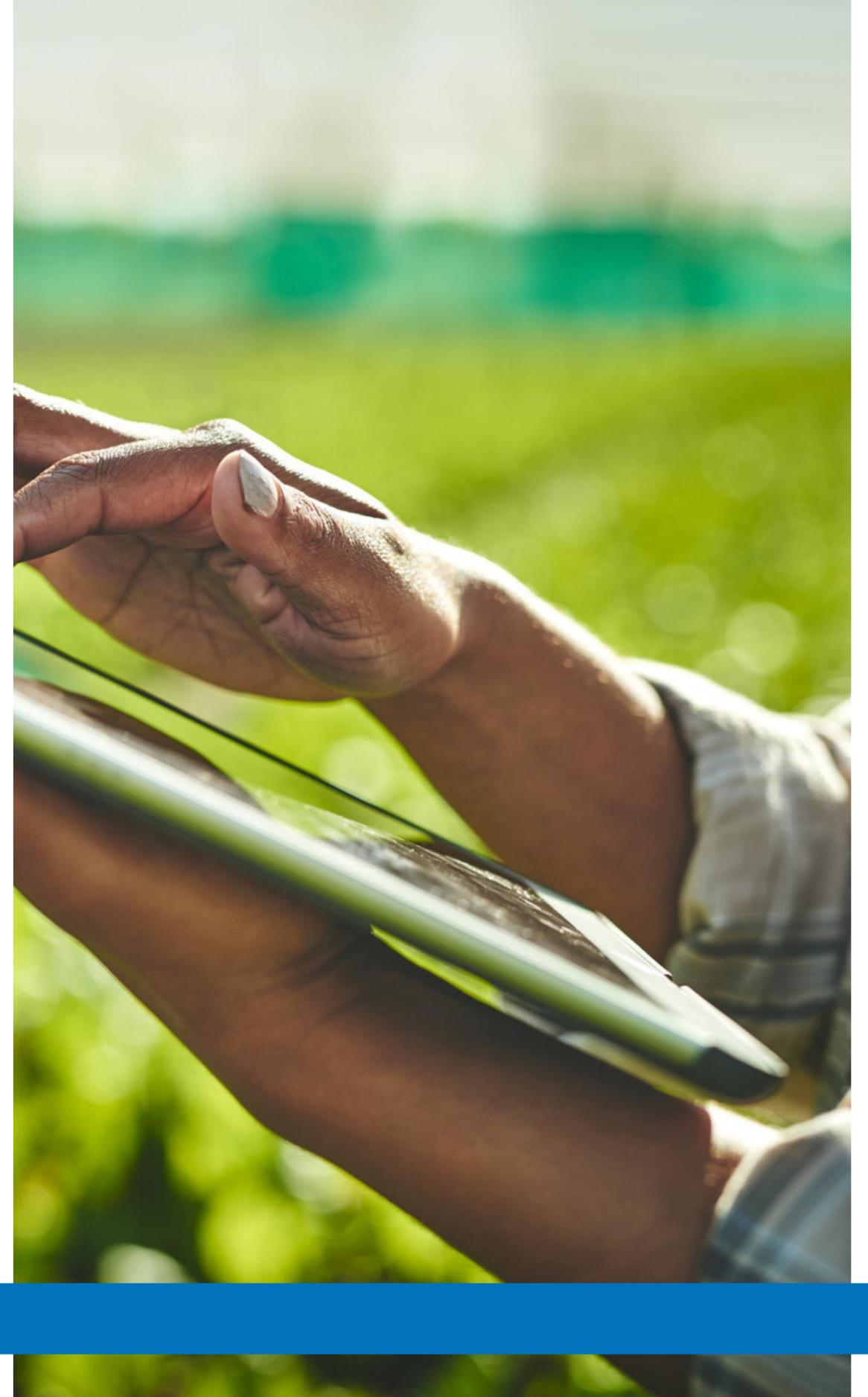
Organic Dairy Data Collection Act

This bipartisan, no-cost bill improves data collection in organic dairy (mirroring data collection in conventional dairy).

Improved data collection will allow organic feedstuff price tracking, help policymakers design better organic programs, and promote resilience in organic dairy.

The Asks:

- In the House – cosponsor H.R. 6937
- In the Senate – sponsor Senate bill; glad to see this included in the Farm Bill Framework



Organic Research

OTA supports the Strengthening Organic Agriculture Research (SOAR) Act to reauthorize and increase funding for the Organic Research and Extension Initiative from \$60M to \$100M.

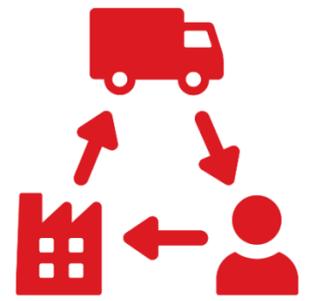
We also support the Organic Science Research Investment (OSRI) Act requiring improved coordination between USDA research agencies and organic research and extension.

The Asks:

- In the House – cosponsor SOAR, H.R. 2720; advocate for inclusion in Farm Bill
- In the Senate – cosponsor OSRI, S. 2317; express appreciation that parts are included in Farm Bill Framework



What Else?



FY 2025 Appropriations Asks:

- ✓ **National Organic Program – \$29 million** – 10 percent increase year over year as was authorized in the last Farm Bill; additional resources are needed to implement Strengthening Organic Enforcement
- ✓ **Organic Market Development Grant Program – \$25 million** – to fill domestic organic supply chain gaps.
- ✓ **Organic Transition Research Program – \$15 million** – to support the development and implementation of research and extension programs to improve the competitiveness of organic farmers and those transitioning to organic certification.
- ✓ **Organic Data Initiative– \$1 million** – to support continuing and expanding organic price reporting and organic data collection.
- ✓ **Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) – \$10 million** – to support ongoing research in organic.

Join the House Organic Caucus!

- ✓ Bipartisan community of Members of Congress
- ✓ Opportunity to support organic even if not on a Committee of jurisdiction
- ✓ Plays a pivotal role in rural development and advancing organic agriculture





App Training

Downloading the App

From: Advocacy Day <advocacyday@advocacyassociates.com>
To: Margaret Lavende <zla+lavender@advocacyday.com>
Subject: Schedule for Okapi Hill Day

Hello Margaret Lavender,

You can access your meeting schedule for Okapi Hill Day on our free "AdvocacyDay" app, available in the App Store for Apple devices and in the Google Play Store for Android devices. The directions to access are as follows:

- In your device's app store, search for "AdvocacyDay" (all one word) and download it
- When you open the app, select "Choose Your Group" and find your group, **Okapi Association**
- If you've used the AdvocacyDay App with this email address before, log in with the credentials you previously created:
 - **Your Username is** zla+lavender@advocacyday.com
 - There is a "Forgot Password" feature if needed
- If you are a new user, click the "Sign Up" button and follow the steps to create an account

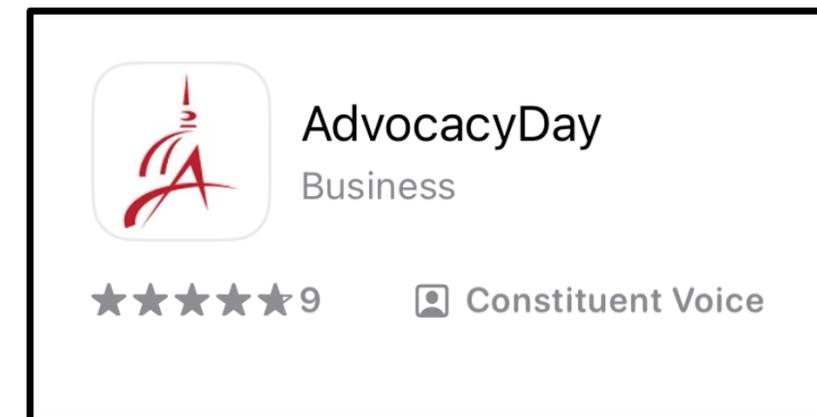
If you already have the AdvocacyDay App downloaded to your device, please make sure it is up-to-date before logging in.

As a web-based backup, you can also view your schedule for Okapi Hill Day here: advocacyday.net/oa. The login/signup process is the same.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact support here: advocacyday.net/oa/support

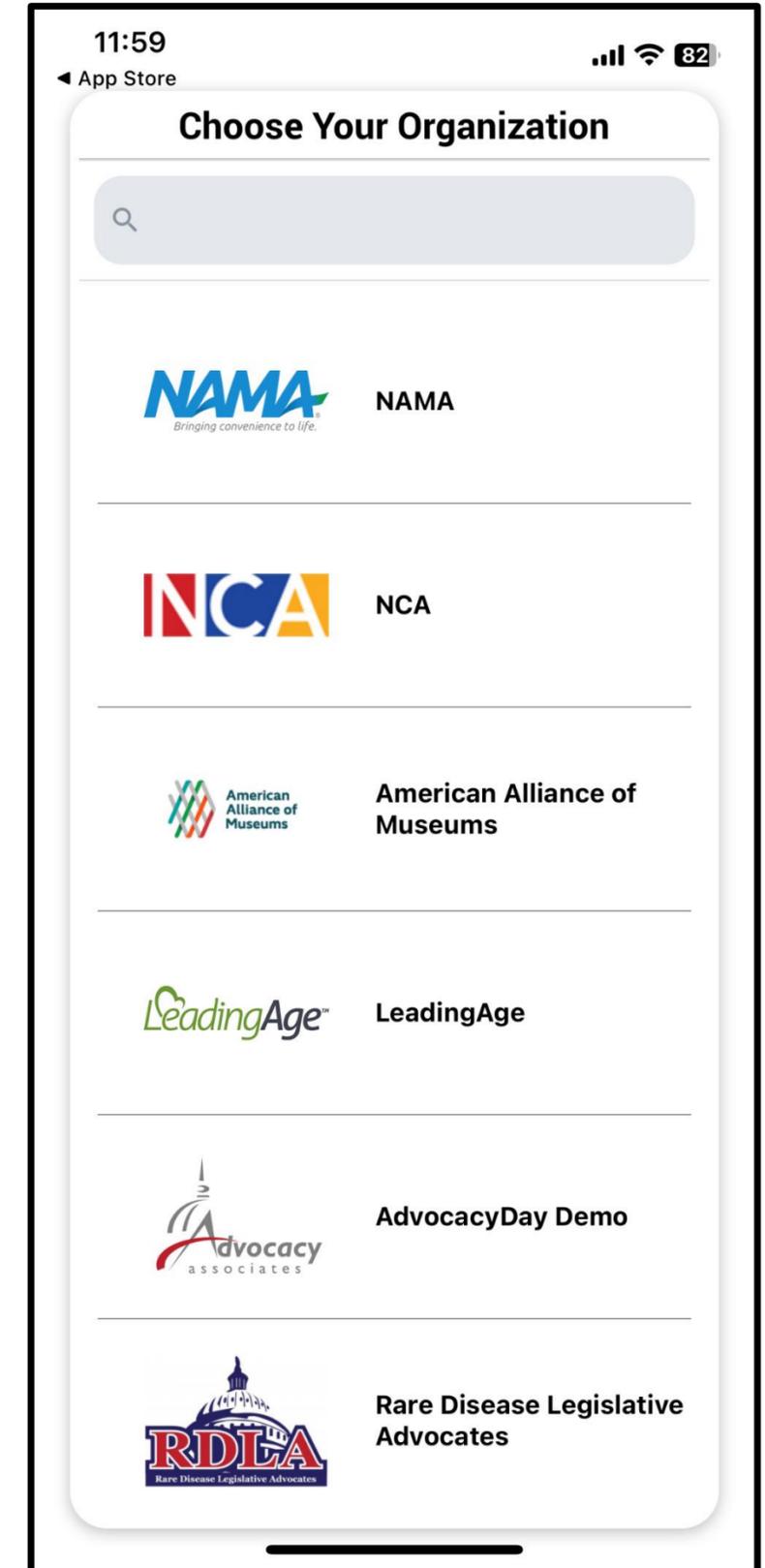
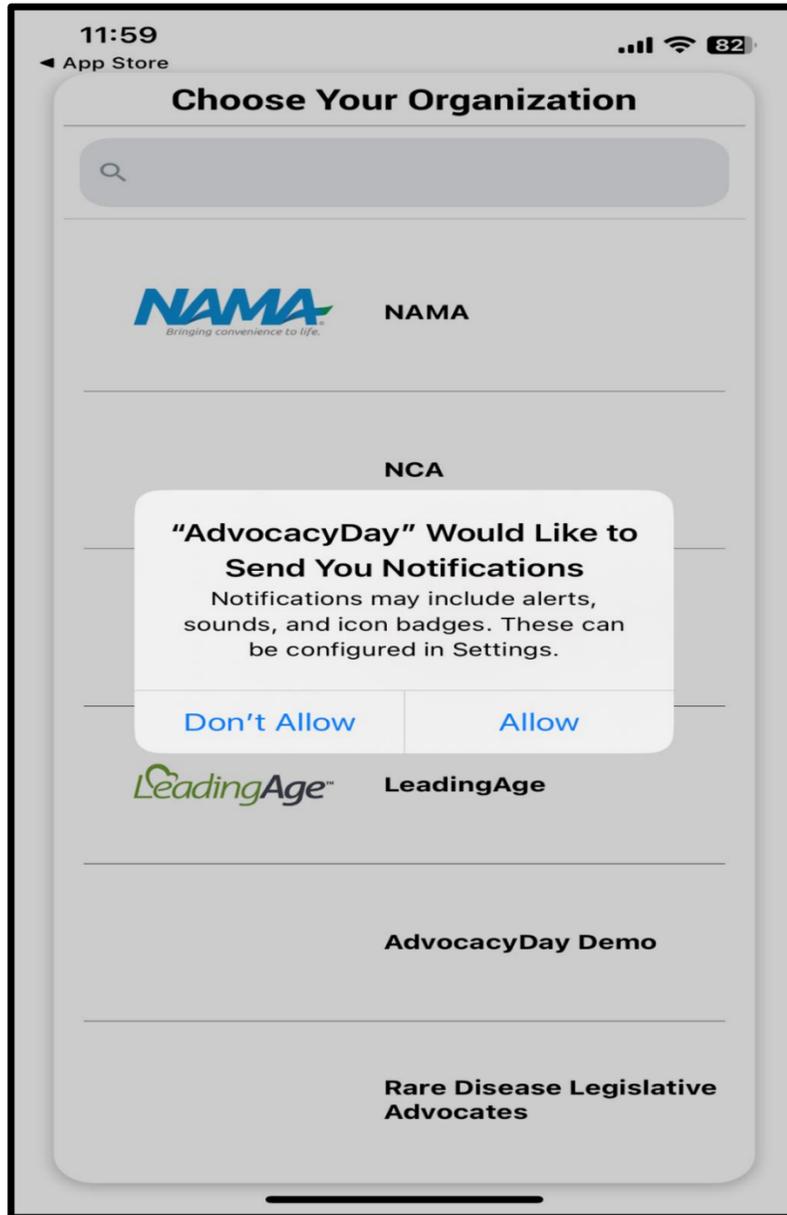
Thank you,
Advocacy Associates

- You will receive an **automated email from Advocacy Associates**
- Check your SPAM/JUNK folder
- **Follow the instructions to download the app**
 - **If the app is already downloaded to your device, ensure it is the most updated version before logging in**



Opening the App

- Select **"Allow"** for notifications
- Select **"Allow While Using App"** for location setting
- Type your organization's name into the Search Bar



Logging In

12:44

Create a new account

Email *

Password *

Confirm Password *

SIGN UP

Already have a code?

Sign In

Support

Welcome to AdvocacyDay.

Zebra Lovers Association

Thank you for signing up for AdvocacyDay.

To complete your login, please enter the following verification code in the prompt on your device:
Your verification code is: **859827**

Thanks,
The Zebra Lovers Association
Advocacy Team

1:45

Confirm Sign Up

Confirmation code has been sent to your e-mail.

Email *

Confirmation Code *

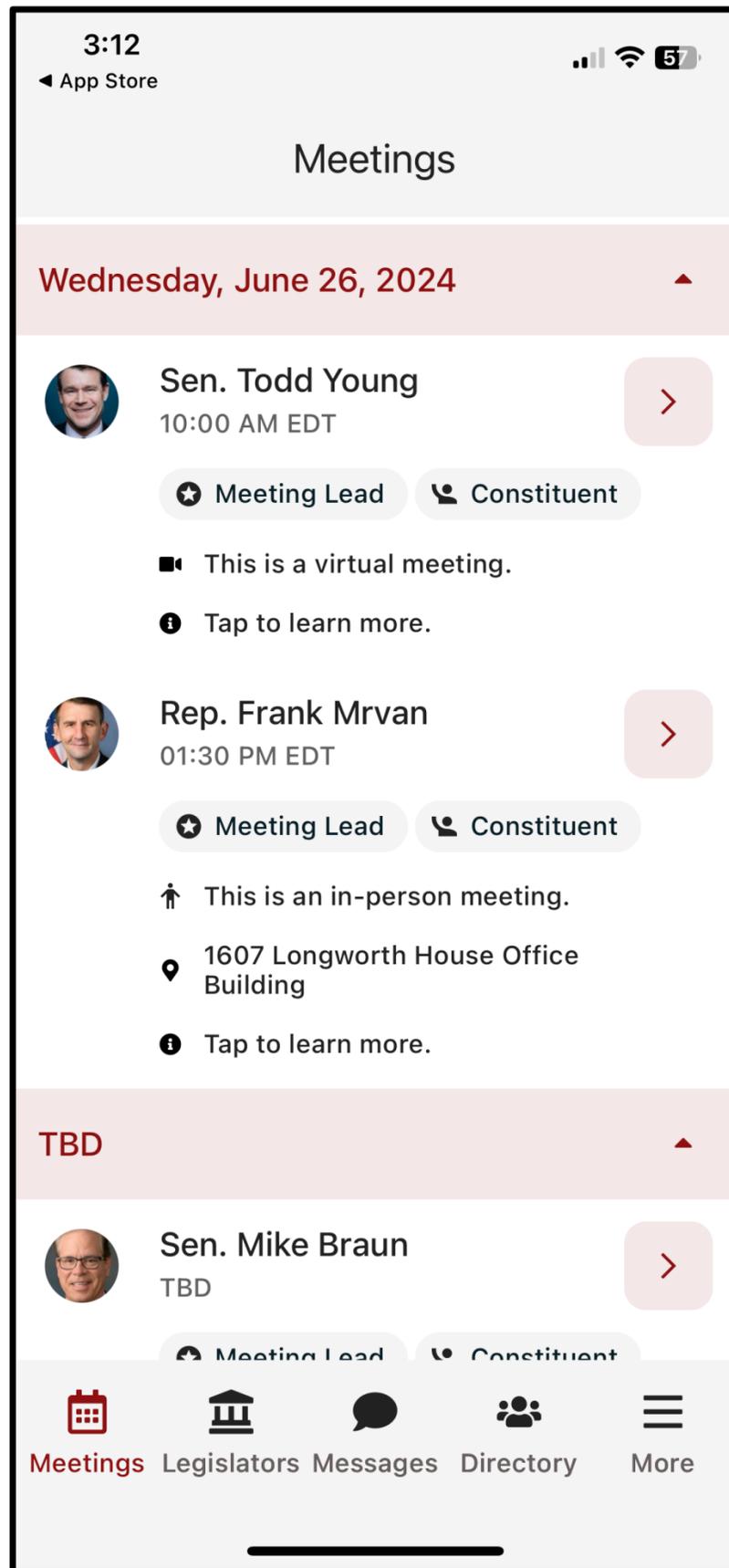
Confirm

Resend code

Back to Sign In

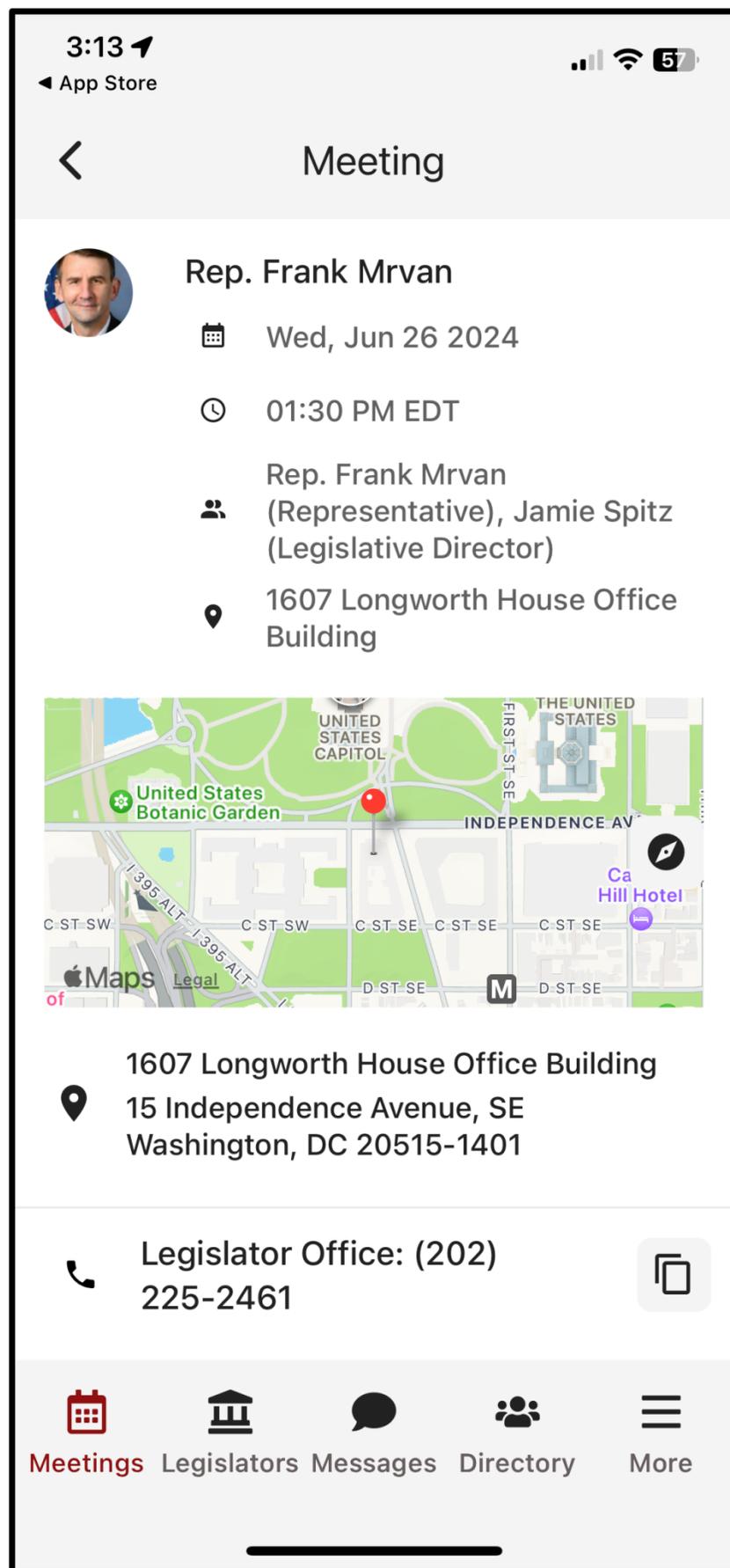
Support

- **EXISTING USERS** who participated in a previous event can login with their email and password
- **NEW USERS** enter your email and create a password. Tap “Sign Up” when finished
- **Check your email** for a verification code. Input your email and the code. Tap “Confirm”



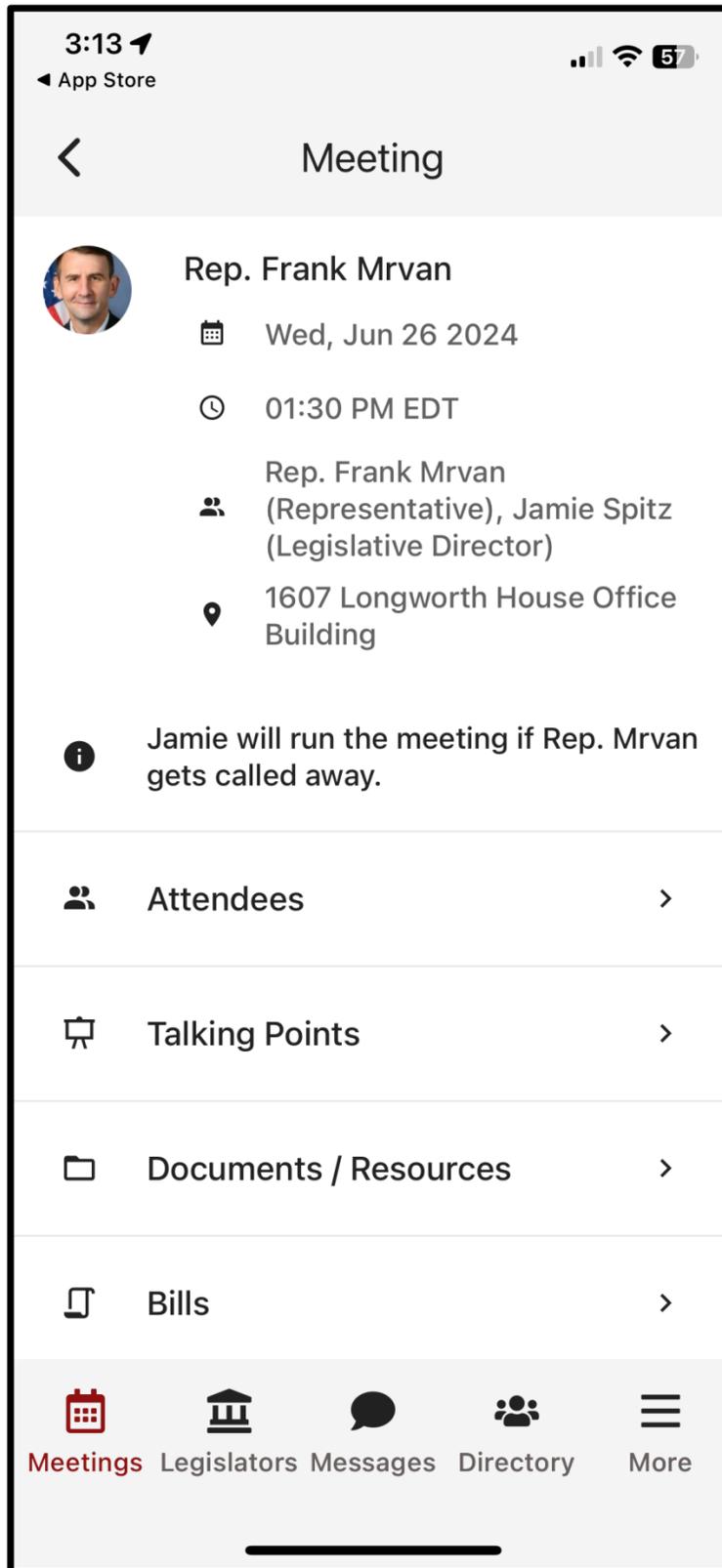
Main Schedule Page

- Confirmed meetings display with a time, pending meetings display as TBD
- All times displayed in local time zone
- Badges indicate if you are a Constituent and/or Meeting Lead
- Tap anywhere on the meeting to learn more



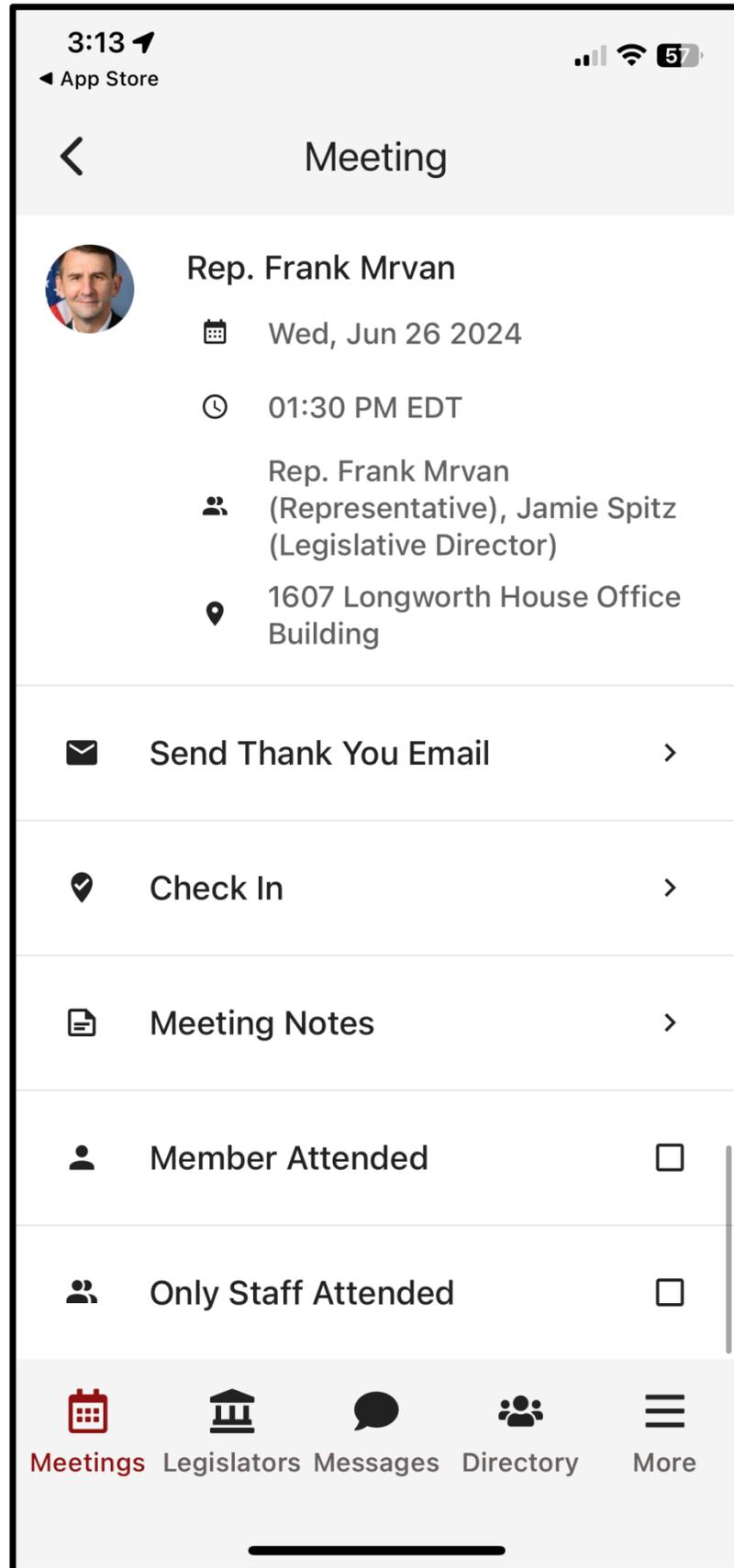
Clicking on a Specific Meeting

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



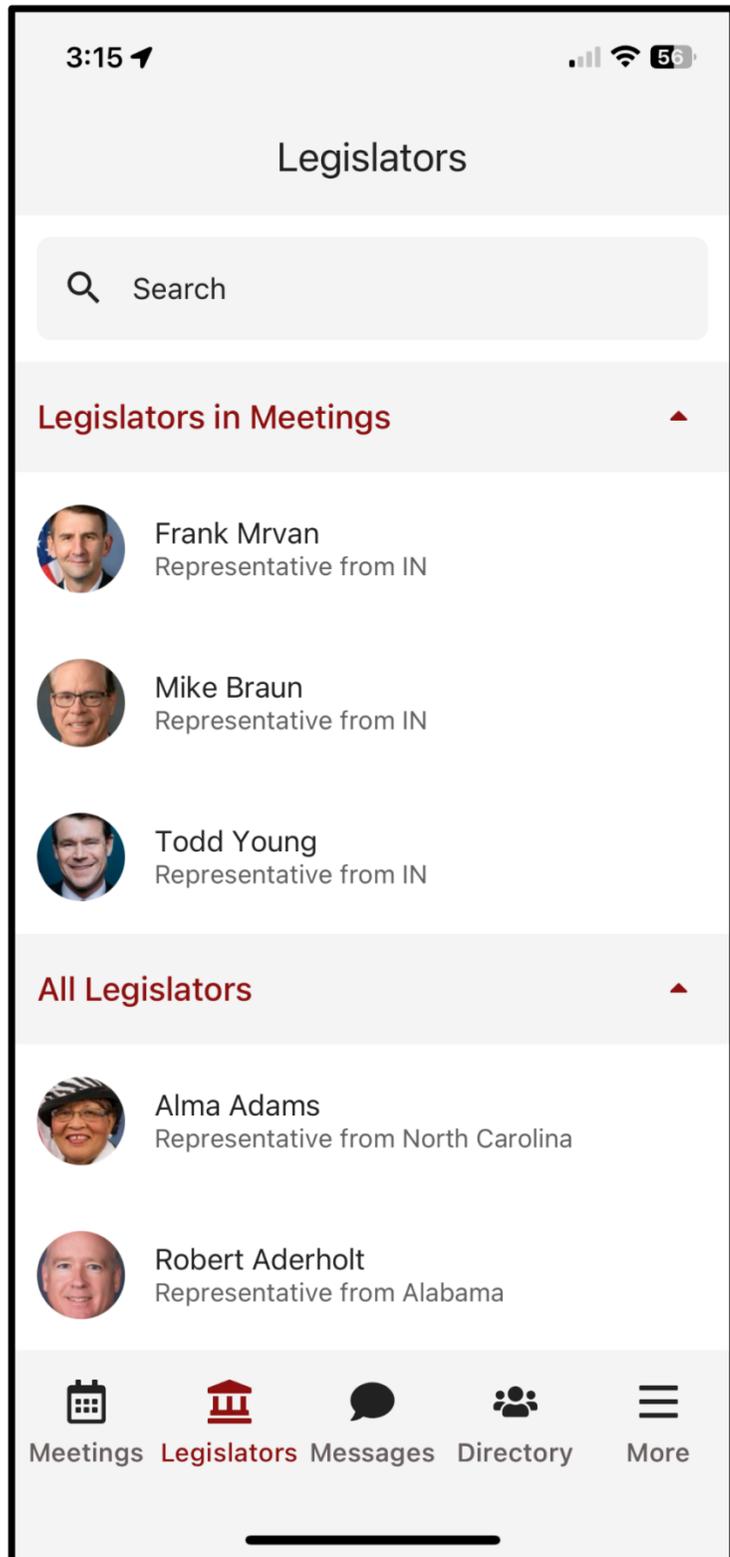
More Specifics in Each Meeting

- Scroll down for important information, including:
 - Attendees
 - Talking points
 - Documents and resources
 - Bills



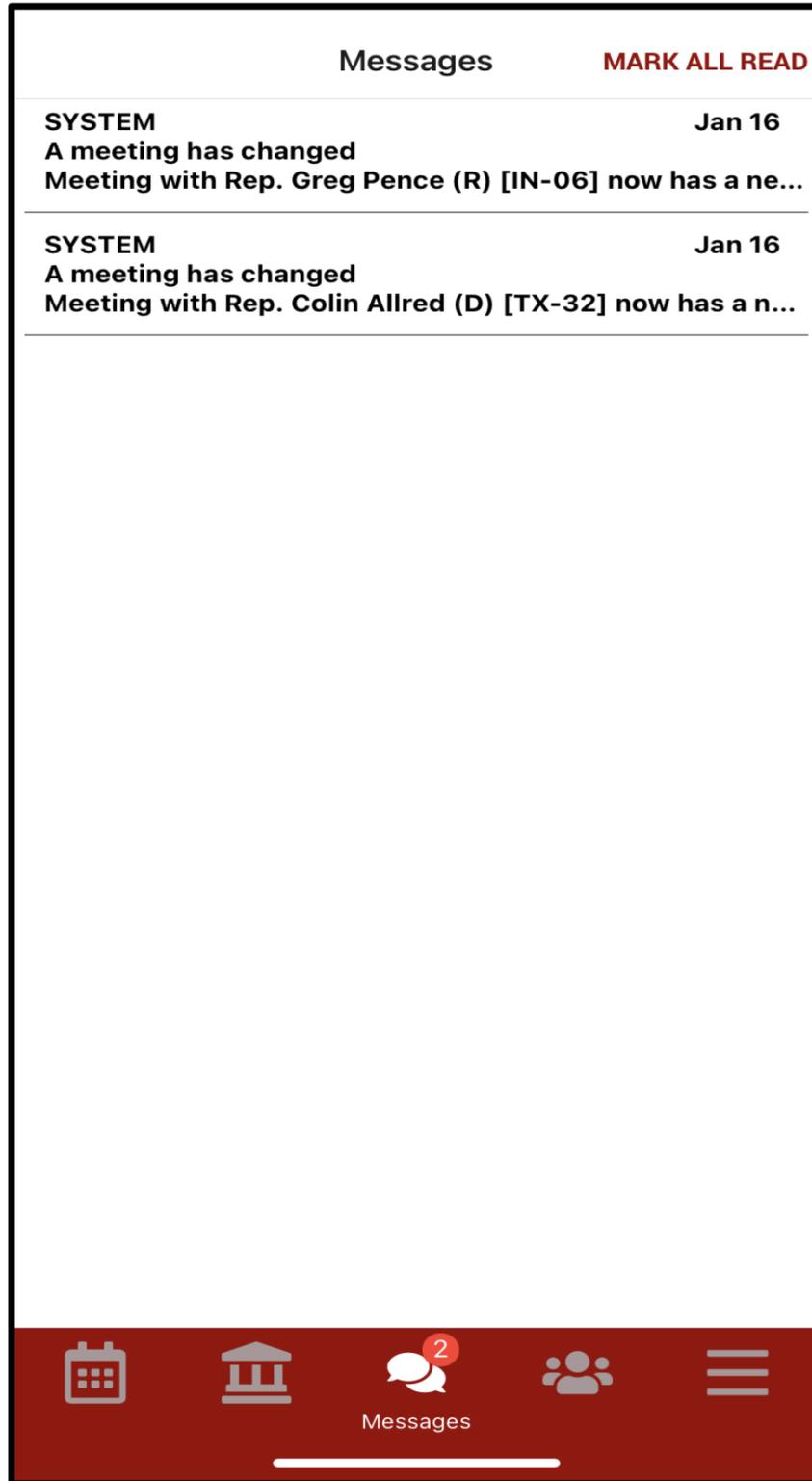
Keep Scrolling to Find...

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



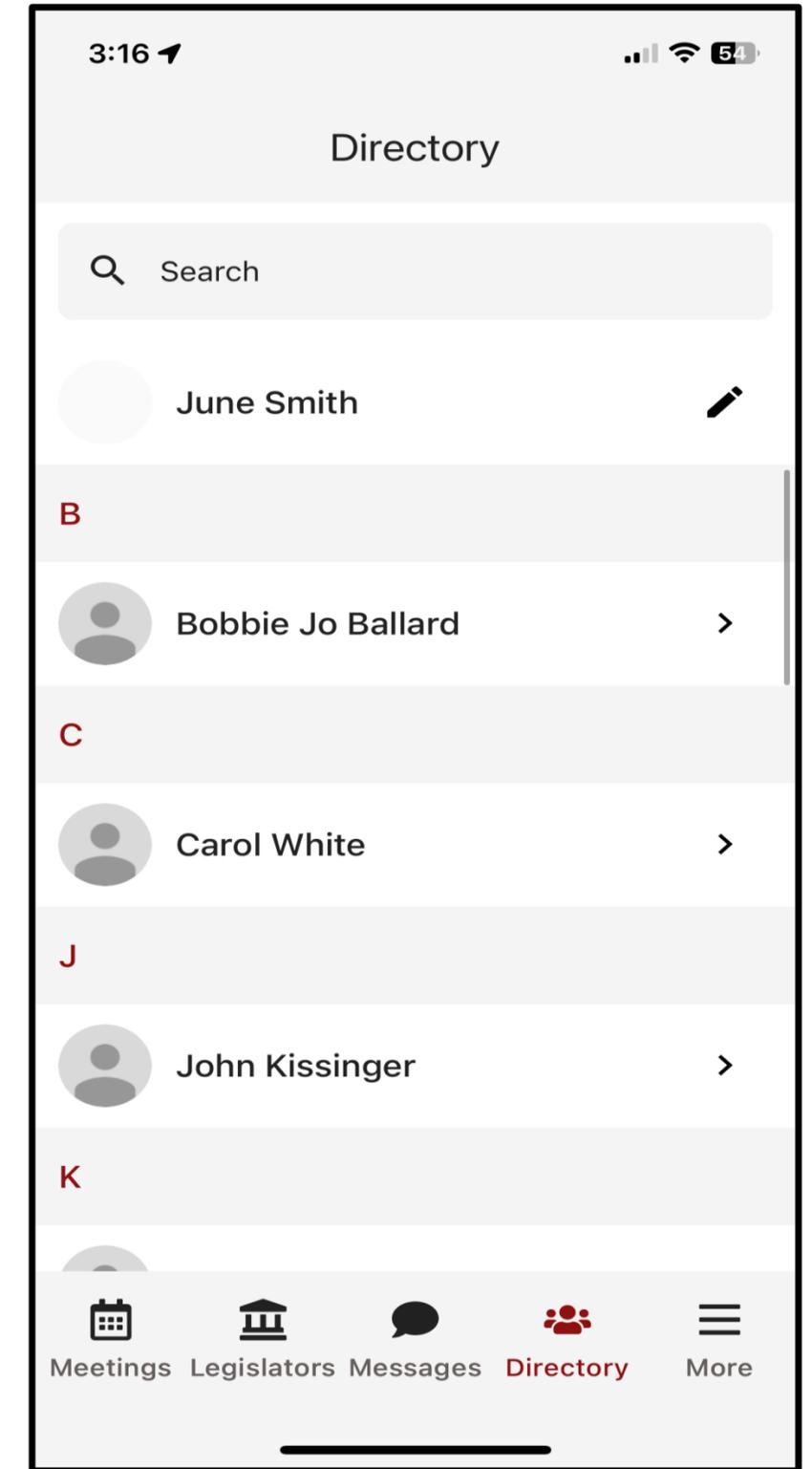
Legislators Tab

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



Other Tabs

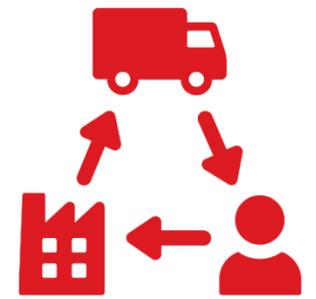
- Messages tab to highlight any updates. You will also receive updates via push notification and email
- Directory tab to look up your event's attendees
- More tab for support and app FAQs
- Team leader survey



Relevant Information and Reminders

- Give yourself **time** to get through security and navigate your way to the office; wear comfortable shoes.
- Meetings may last between **15-30 minutes**; keep an eye on time
- Any changes to your schedule the day of the event **will be sent to you via push notification and email, and flagged in the Messages tab in the app.** Please be sure to check regularly throughout the day.

OTA Advocacy Day Resource Page: ota.com/hill-visit-resource-center



QUESTIONS?

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