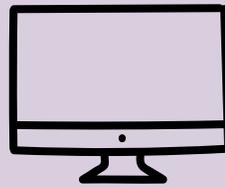
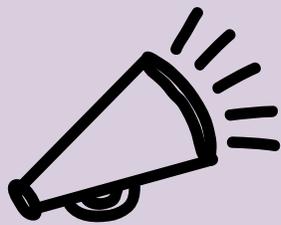


*Fight Back NOW*

# Activist Toolkit



# INTRODUCTION

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The National Organization for Women-New York is organizing Fight Back NOW teams across New York State to resist the Trump agenda. We hope to unite progressive women and men within their own communities who are ready to stand up for women's rights and social justice. This toolkit is designed to help our Fight Back NOW teams engage with each other and with their representatives. Teams in key congressional districts will lay the groundwork for change in the 2018 election.

As the largest chapter of NOW in the country, NOW New York is at the forefront of advocating for women and girls. We work to defend reproductive rights, fight economic inequality, and end violence and discrimination against women. We are mobilizing activists statewide to hold the line on our hard-won rights.

***“President Trump’s blatant disregard for women’s rights is clear to see anywhere you look, as he attempts to dismantle the Affordable Care Act, limit birth control access and ban immigrants from this country.”***

***—Sonia Ossorio, President, NOW New York***



# PRIORITY ACTION AREA #1: ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Minutes after President Trump was sworn in, the White House website was wiped clean of research and reports on rape, sexual assault, and domestic violence. We must not forget Trump's unapologetic comments about grabbing women and the dozen sexual assault allegations against him. **This is not normal for a Commander-in-Chief.**

On March 20, 2017, we launched our **Take Rape Seriously NOW** campaign to proactively defend the vital programs of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) that implement prevention programs and survivor support services. We will not let the Trump administration obliterate these programs under our watch! Learn more about the act on our [VAWA factsheet](#).

## Here's what our #TakeRapeSeriously NOW campaign will do:

1. **Amplify** the voices of survivors and advocates to end violence against women across New York State.
2. **Document** the vital need for the VAWA-funded programs under threat.
3. **Demand** that our elected leaders fully fund and implement VAWA, and oppose any legislation or budget cuts that seek to dismantle women's rights.

## Our First Steps to Save VAWA:

1. **Sign [our petition to protect VAWA](#)**, and share the petition on social media using [#SaveVAWA](#), [#TakeRapeSeriously](#), and [#NOWweResist](#).
2. We're holding Women's Town Halls to speak out against violence and demand better from our representatives. Join us! **Visit [nownyc.org](#) for the latest calendar of events.**
3. Fight Back NOW Teams will meet with their representatives to urge their support for VAWA and the issues that matter most to them.



### ***Remember, we're just getting started!***

No matter what your issue—let's join together to take back the House in 2018 and take back our democracy after that. Meet your team and schedule a meeting with your representative. Here are some important tools to get you started....

# YOUR NEXT STEPS

## It's time to meet with your local Fight Back NOW Team!

Pick a local coffeeshop or neighborhood spot, or invite a few friends over. Here's a sample agenda for your first meeting:



- ⇒ **Welcome** your team. Introductions! Do a quick ice breaker (they may seem silly but they really work to get people talking!).
- ⇒ **Pick an administrative leader or co-leaders** who will collect contact information, organize outreach for meetings, and help set the agenda (if you have a really large group, you can form small task forces for specific areas like: Steering/Planning; Social Media/Communications; Research; Outreach/Meetings).
- ⇒ **Establish team meeting dates and times.** Do you want to meet monthly or weekly? Do you want to do some conference calls and some in-person meet-ups?
- ⇒ **Review our [VAWA factsheet](#)** and information to prep on this issue for a meeting with your representative.
- ⇒ **Select tentative dates** to schedule a meeting with your legislator to talk about VAWA.
- ⇒ **Discuss other issues of interest and news** about elected officials in your district/area. Is there a town hall in your area?
- ⇒ **Assign roles and tasks** to be completed by next group meeting.
  - ⇒ Meet with legislator or secure a date for a meeting.
  - ⇒ Circulate NOW-NY's Protect VAWA petition on [change.org](#) and collect signatures.
- ⇒ **Let us know what your team is doing!** Send us an email, take and share pics, and tag us on social media - #NOWweResist and #SaveVAWA

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# STAY CONNECTED

- ⇒ **Email** [nownystate@gmail.com](mailto:nownystate@gmail.com) to join our monthly **Fight Back Now Conference Call**.
- ⇒ **Get** the [Voices App](#) and get in contact directly with your representatives for easy political efficacy. **You can call, tweet, & email your elected officials instantly!**
- ⇒ **Follow** action alerts from NOW-NYC and other social justice organizations.

# GET TO KNOW YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

## Learn more about your elected officials:

- ⇒ **Review** their biographies and backgrounds on their websites.
- ⇒ **Set up** Google alerts with your legislators' names.
- ⇒ **Review** their social media pages and past interviews.
- ⇒ **Google** your elected officials.
- ⇒ **Learn more** about their backgrounds, their political ties and affiliations, their voting past, and their current activities.

### Who are my representatives' donors and supporters?

- ⇒ [OpenSecrets](#)
- ⇒ [Follow the Money](#)

### Where do your representatives stand on the issues?

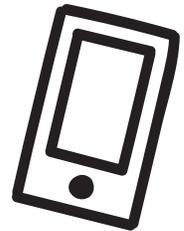
- ⇒ [VoteSmart](#)
- ⇒ [Ballotopedia](#)

## How do I connect with my representatives?

- ⇒ When Congress is not in session, your representative will be in your district and should be available to meet. Check out the Congressional calendar [here](#).
- ⇒ **Sign up** for your representatives' email lists.
- ⇒ **Follow** their social media handles.
- ⇒ **Call** your representatives' offices to ask about events, town halls, etc.

## Calling Your Representatives:

- ⇒ **Get the name(s)** for the staff member(s) who work on your issue.
- ⇒ Highlight that **you are a constituent**.
- ⇒ **Make it personal** - tell your story.
- ⇒ **Focus** on ONE issue per call so you can get specific.
- ⇒ **Take notes** and report back to NOW!



## Here's an example:

*"Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a constituent. Recently, the Violence Against Women Act has come under attack by the Trump administration, and I am calling on Representative \_\_\_\_\_ to support fully funding VAWA. It has revolutionized the way the country combats gender violence. With 1 in 3 women facing physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, we cannot afford to lose even one dollar of support. Thank you."*

# FIND YOUR REPRESENTATIVES



Use the resources below to find your representatives from the local to federal level.

## Federal

The White House  
202-456-1414  
[Email](#) • [Website](#)

## Senate

Sen. Chuck Schumer  
202-224-6542  
212-486-4430  
[Email](#) • [Website](#)

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand  
202-224-4451  
212-688-6262  
[Email](#) • [Website](#)

## US House of Representatives

US Representative [here](#)

## State

Governor Andrew Cuomo  
518-474-8390  
[Email](#) • [Website](#)

## NY State Senate

NYS Senator [here](#)

## NY State Assembly

NYS Assemblymember [here](#)

## Local

Mayor DeBlasio [here](#)  
Borough President:  
[Manhattan](#)  
[Brooklyn](#)  
[Bronx](#)  
[Queens](#)  
[Staten Island](#)

NYC Councilmember [here](#)

## Your County Executive / County Legislators

Search for your county executives with a search engine

# RESOURCES

## Call Scripts & Transcripts

- ⇒ [thesixtyfive.org](https://thesixtyfive.org)
- ⇒ [5calls.org](https://5calls.org)
- ⇒ [deedsnotwords.com](https://deedsnotwords.com)

## Guidebooks

- ⇒ [Indivisible Guide](#)
- ⇒ [Flippable](#)
- ⇒ [ACLU People Power](#)
- ⇒ [Congressional Recess Toolkit](#)
- ⇒ [Resistance Manual Resource Guide](#)
- ⇒ [Our States](#)

*Now that you know your representatives, it's time to hold them accountable.*

# WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Does your local newspaper accept letters to the editor or op-ed submissions? Words are sometimes the most effective tools at our disposal. **Write about an issue that you want to address with your neighbors**, like the potential defunding of VAWA, and **get it published!**

## Why Write An Op-Ed?

An op-ed can have a targeted audience or can be written for the general public. Op-eds are usually written by organizations, activists, experts, opinion leaders, or private citizens. The goal of an op-ed is to present a clear, dynamic opinion on an issue that has the capability to inform and engage the reader.

## When and Why to Write a Letter to the Editor:

A letter to the editor (LTE) is a **response to an article or column** posted in a magazine. An LTE can come from various sources- private citizens, activists, other

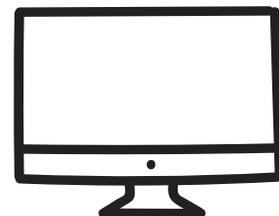
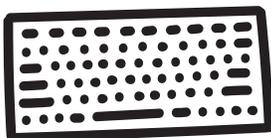
journalists, or experts in the issues discussed in the original article. However, LTE's are often most effective when they are crafted by those who have a **unique perspective or breadth of knowledge about the subject expressed in the original article.**

*Read NOW-NYC President Sonia Ossorio's recent [op-ed about VAWA in the Huffington Post.](#)*

Though LTE's are often take the opposing side of the narrative presented in the original article, they can also be spaces to reaffirm an piece of writing that supports your view-point and add more context to the position presented.

Here are some [dos & don'ts](#) to get you started on your op-ed or LTE.

*Make a greater impact – Regularly visit our [action page](#) to find out about more actions you can take.*



# HERE'S WHAT YOUR GROUP CAN DO

## Lobby Your Elected Leaders

Lobbying may sound intimidating, but all it means is **setting up a meeting about an issue that matters to you**. Meeting as a group with your legislators is **one of the strongest forms of civic engagement**. Download our [How to Lobby Workshop presentation](#) for your Fight Back NOW Team meeting!

### Set up a meeting with your elected official:

**Call your legislator's local district office** and ask the scheduler to set up a meeting with you. **Tell them you are a constituent** and what you would like to discuss.

### Prepare For Your Meeting With Your Legislator:

- ⇒ **Gather a group of people** who live in your district (if possible - if not, on your own is fine, too) to attend a meeting and represent your district and interests.
- ⇒ **Have talking points ready.**
- ⇒ **Come with stories and experiences** - personal narratives are the best way to make sure your voice and concerns are heard.
- ⇒ **Bring along materials** you may want to leave with your official - [VAWA factsheet](#), list of [NY VAWA grant recipients](#), [NOW-NYC petition](#).
- ⇒ **Take notes.**
- ⇒ **Get contact info and follow up** with your representative afterwards.
  - ⇒ Exchange business cards. Try to get an official's or staffer's card!
- ⇒ **Follow up with NOW!** Fill out our [lobby feedback form](#) so we help hold our leaders accountable. By sharing information, we begin to build our campaign for or against this elected official in their next election!

## *Lobbying 101*

### Do

- ⇒ Know the issue and the counter arguments.
- ⇒ Meet with supporters and adversaries.
- ⇒ Make a specific "ask".
- ⇒ Follow-up.
- ⇒ Record, Track, and Report.

### Don't

- ⇒ Provide inaccurate information.
- ⇒ Turn down a meeting with staff.
- ⇒ Be disrespectful.

## Protest

If you feel you are not getting through to your legislators, **protesting is always an option!** Need a checklist to get you started? Check out our [Planning a Protest guide](#).

**Download our [Planning a Protest presentation](#) for your next meeting!**

### In order for your protest to be effective:

- ⇒ Ensure your **protest has a clear mission** and end goal.
- ⇒ Have bold, simple signs that communicate your message clearly so the media and public understand what issue your demonstration addresses.
- ⇒ **Get permits in advance** - although sometimes it is possible to simply get out there with some signs.
- ⇒ Decide what format you want for your protest and **plan for the day**.
- ⇒ Recruit a solid **team of volunteers** and get your social media ready.
- ⇒ **Make sure the press is there!**

Whatever you choose to do, always...

## *Amplify Your Message!*



**NOW New York is here to be your megaphone.** Share what you're doing on social media, email us, call us, and send us your photos and videos so **we can share your work widely** and build our resistance!

### SOCIAL MEDIA:

Help us **show the power of our Fight Back NOW Teams.**

Email us your progress: [contact@nownyc.org](mailto:contact@nownyc.org) or [nownewyorkstate@gmail.com](mailto:nownewyorkstate@gmail.com).

Start a facebook group for your Fight Back NOW team. Post your Fight Back NOW team events to your facebook page and your Google group and calendar.

#### **Accounts:**

[Facebook](#)  
[Twitter](#)  
[Instagram](#)  
[Medium](#)

#### **Hashtags:**

#NOWweResist  
#TakeRapeSeriously  
#SaveVAWA

# OUR COMMITMENT PLEDGE

**I will... Speak Up. Rise Up. Act NOW.**

**As a NOW-NYC member, I commit to take action to:**

- 1.** Advance equality and justice for all people.
- 2.** Hold our elected leaders accountable and demand they denounce racism, sexism, and bigotry.
- 3.** Stand up for reproductive justice and access to healthcare.
- 4.** Protect free speech and preserve our right to speak out and protest.
- 5.** Take on the economic inequality that drives our division.
- 6.** Take Rape Seriously and dismantle toxic masculinity and rape culture in one generation.
- 7.** Elect pro-women's rights and pro-choice leaders.
- 8.** Challenge the forces that deny climate change & environmental science.
- 9.** Dare to speak the truth and challenge myself to learn, listen, speak up, and engage as an activist, ally, and witness.
- 10.** Ensure New York remains an inclusive safe haven for women, girls, people of color, LGBTQ individuals, immigrants, those with disabilities, and all Americans.

**FIGHT BACK  
NOW  
NEW YORK**  
NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN