

# 2020 August Congressional Recess

Thank you for ordering an August Recess Toolkit!

## What Is August Congressional Recess?



Each August, Members of Congress leave Washington, DC, and return to their states and districts. Typically, it is a time when chapters of The Arc meet with their Members of Congress face to face, invite them to events, or attend town hall meetings. It is an important opportunity to make sure Members of Congress hear about key issues for people with disabilities, their families, and the direct support professional workforce.

## How You Can Do Virtual Congressional Outreach



This year, due to the coronavirus pandemic, August recess outreach must be different – your safety is key, and we are encouraging virtual, instead of in-person, events. On the next page, you will find some ideas for virtual August recess outreach. Use the swag as an incentive for advocates to get involved – you can send them swag after they take action or buttons to wear during a virtual townhall!

\*\*\*Please note: Make sure that your chapter understands and follows the do's and don'ts for non-profit organizations doing advocacy work during an election year. You can find resources at [bolderadvocacy.org](http://bolderadvocacy.org).\*\*\*

Don't forget – you will get an email in early September to report on your August recess activities!

Questions? Please contact Claire Manning, Director of Advocacy & Mobilization, at [manning@thearc.org](mailto:manning@thearc.org).

# Ideas for Safe August Congressional Recess Activities



**Send the swag to advocates.** Ask them to take pictures with the swag and post it on social media—with a sentence or two about what they are advocating for—and tag their Members of Congress. You can find a list of Congressional Twitter handles at <https://www.sbh4all.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/116th-Congress-Twitter-Handles.pdf>



**Join virtual town hall meetings** hosted by your Representative or Senators, encourage advocates to join (and wear their new buttons!), and ask questions about issues that are important to the disability community. You can find upcoming town hall meetings at [townhallproject.com](http://townhallproject.com).



**Say Thank You.** Have your Members of Congress recently supported legislation that is important to you? Thank them! Ask advocates to take pictures of themselves saying, “Thank you!” (and wearing their August Recess swag) and tweet them at your Members of Congress with a message of thanks about the bill.



**Invite each of your Members of Congress** to join a virtual meeting (Zoom, Webex, etc.) with a group of advocates. Ask advocates to introduce themselves and talk about issues that are important to them, just like you would at an in-person meeting.



**Draft an email** that advocates can copy/edit to share their individual story while also remaining focused on a specific policy or issue, or encourage people to take a video of themselves or a picture and share it on social media. You can always find The Arc’s latest action alerts at [thearc.org/action](http://thearc.org/action).



**Check the website** of your Members of Congress to see what options they have to connect with constituents during the pandemic.



**Make sure to connect** with your Members of Congress on social media. Their offices monitor their social media comments, tweets, etc., and comments are visible to all other followers.