



## PUBLIC POLICY IN DIETETICS 101

**How advocacy efforts relate to YOUR future profession.**

*“If dietetics is your [future] profession, public policy should be your passion”*

### WHO-WHAT-WHERE-WHY-WHEN

**Who:** The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Affiliate Public Policy Panels, Legislative and Public Policy Committee (LPPC), the Academy’s Political Action Committee (ANDPAC), Dietetic Practice Groups (DPGs), Member Interest Groups (MIGs), RDNs and grassroots members across the US all help coordinate and execute advocacy and public policy related efforts. These efforts affect the entire profession of dietetics from students to retired professionals, and the public.

**What:** To advocate means to communicate with our Members of Congress and State Legislators to advance particular issues, causes or policies, typically in the form of a bill, related to improving America’s food, nutrition and health, promoting the dietetics profession and the Academy’s public image.

**Where:** Across the US on the local, state and federal levels.

**Why:** To improve America’s food, nutrition and health, promote the profession of dietetics and gain public traction as the experts in nutrition and dietetics. Did you know that the majority of dietetics related jobs are publically funded? These efforts ensure that Americans will continue to have the experts in nutrition working for them with evidenced-based practice in a variety of ways.

**When:** At all times! The Academy’s Policy Initiatives and Advocacy office in Washington, DC along with the LPPC tracks prominent legislation related to the profession and strategically targets issues that affect dietitians. For example, preventative health related legislation.

## How can YOU get involved?

There are numerous ways that students can help ensure dietitians remain prominent in the public policy arena:

- Action Center: Quickly send a letter of support to your Member of Congress on the Academy's behalf. Every voice counts, and every letter counts. To learn more, visit: <http://www.eatrightpro.org/resources/advocacy/action-center>
- ANDPAC: Donate to help set the table for the Academy to have a conversation with a Member of Congress. Become a student star today: <http://www.eatrightpro.org/resources/advocacy/political-action-committee>
- Story Telling: What's your nutrition and dietetics related story? How does it relate to making Americans healthier? These stories are important to your representatives when they relate to relevant legislation.
- Write a letter: Take action alerts by combining it with story-telling to personalize your voice and passion for your cause.
- Meet with your representative or senator: Face-to-face meetings show our representatives and senators just how passionate we truly are for the causes we support.
- Attend your state affiliate's policy events: Learn more about how to be an effective advocate for the profession by collaborating with RDNs and other dietetics students in your state.
- Attend the Academy's Public Policy Workshop: Come together with dietetic professionals, Academy leaders, and dietetics students from all over the country that believe in the same initiatives that you do.
- Track your representatives/senators via social media or sign up for their listserves: Where are they, and what are they doing? Keep up to date on the legislation they're working on.

**Student voices DO matter!**

## TERMS TO KNOW

Advocacy: Public support for a particular cause or policy.

ANDPAC: The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Political Action Committee that promotes nutrition-related public policy efforts by fundraising and donating to those Members of Congress that support Academy initiatives.

Bipartisan: Cooperation of two political parties that generally oppose each other's policies.

Constituent: That's you! A voting member of a community with the power to appoint or elect.

Grassroots: Advocacy activity that happens at the local or community level.

Legislator: A leader in state office and a member of the House or Senate.

LPPC: The Academy's Legislative and Public Policy Committee. This committee is responsible for determining the public policy priorities for the Academy.

Member of Congress: A leader in federal office and a member of either the US House of Representatives or Senate.

Nonpartisan: Not biased or partisan, especially toward any particular political group.