

# **Advocacy 201:** Leveling Up Your Digital Advocacy Engagement in the Fight Against ALS

**Beekeeper Group**  
July 2023



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# Alex Dickinson

As Partner and Chief of Staff at Beekeeper Group, Alex uses her background as a content and messaging strategist and digital advocacy tactician to shape our unique approach. Prior to joining Beekeeper in 2012, she worked at C-SPAN where she helped produce American History TV.



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# 2023 ALS ASSOCIATION SPONSORS



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# 2023 ALS ASSOCIATION SPONSORS

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## In this session...

This advanced session will highlight methods for leveraging digital tools to establish the ALS Association as a leading organization in the fight against ALS. Participants will learn how to create and use digital materials to inform, educate, and persuade lawmakers and their staff about the issues that matter.





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# Our learning objectives

- Understand the importance of elevating constituents' opinions to legislators using digital tactics.
- Learn how to align ALS messaging priorities with content for appropriate audiences to achieve specific advocacy goals.
- Discover cutting edge tools and best practices to improve advocacy messaging.



Answer in chat:

**How have you engaged with an elected  
official?**

*(meeting, action alert, letter, tweet, etc)*

# Understanding the Audience





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# Stakeholder Wheel



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# Newness Abounds in 2023



- New Congress
- New Majority in the House
- New House Leadership
- New Members
- New and old Legislation
- New Committee Chairs and Assignments
- New Issues
- New Challenges



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# WIIFM: What's In It For Me?



Interspersing calls-to-action with creative or educational content will ultimately pay off in a more engaged community in the future. It's important to put ourselves in the shoes of our (likely busy, stressed, and in email overload) advocates when we communicate by delivering **value**, **brevity**, and even delight.

The recipient wants to know **“What’s in it for me?”**

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# Why should I care?

# What's in it for me?



## Audiences

- What's the next thing you want them to do?
  - Visit this website
  - Make a donation today
  - Vote on this bill
- Decide if you're trying to shape the environment or seeking measurable change.

## Goals

- What's In It For Me?
- Digital gives us the ability to talk to many audiences at once...
- Editorial calendar planning
- Consistency is crucial – so consider keeping your content to 3 key points!



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# Framing



The Truth

ABCDEFGHIJ  
KLMNOPQRS  
TUVWXYZ

Your Truth

AZXF  
PUY  
RTMVQ

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# Structure



- **AIDA - Attention, Interest, Desire, Action**
  - Did you know your OOP prescription drug costs could increase? Congress can close the donut hole, but they need to know this is a priority for you. Sign this petition today.
- **C3PO - Clear Picture, Prove, Push, Offer**
  - Alzheimer's Disease kills more people than breast cancer and prostate cancer combined. With nearly 6 million Americans living with the disease, we have to do more. Join us in the fight to end Alzheimer's in America.
- **PAS - Problem Action Solution**
  - In recent weeks, many people with heart and stroke emergencies have delayed seeking medical help or decided to just 'sit it out' and stay at home because of their fear of COVID-19. The message is simple and clear. If you are experiencing the symptoms of a heart attack or stroke: don't delay. Every minute counts.

# Bringing in Constituent Voices



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# Constituents (you!) Are Key



- Members of Congress represent and serve their constituents several ways, including by developing and voting on legislation
- If you can work those constituent voices into your efforts it will make a bigger impact
- The changes with virtual technology levels the playing field and makes advocacy more accessible

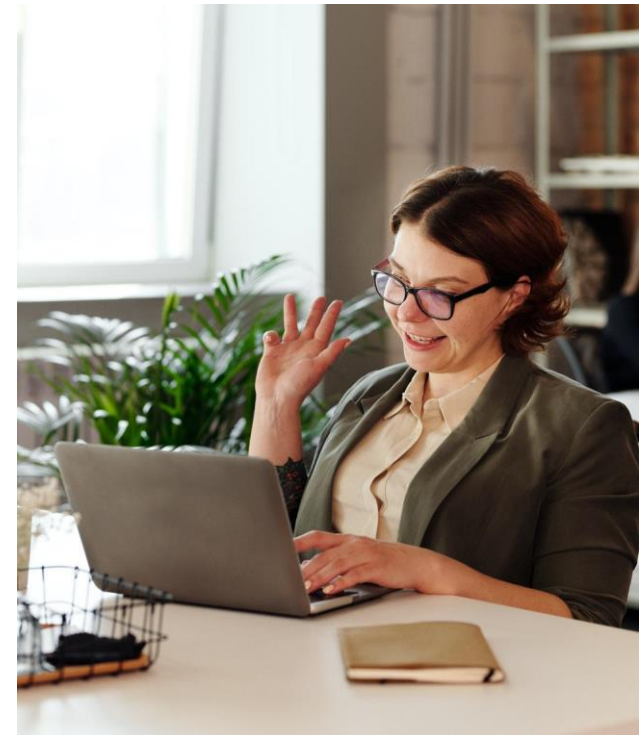


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# Opportunity to Educate



- New members of Congress and their staff are not instant experts on most issues, and many take years to develop positions on some
- There are always new wrinkles in old issues, even for established offices
- Congressional staff need reliable information that can be easily found, digested, forwarded and repeated back to their boss to formulate opinions
- Develop contacts with offices and be the source of relevant information
- **Make it relevant to your district or state**



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# The Power of Stories



- First-person perspectives or real stories are a powerful communication tool that harness the power of narrative transportation
- Stories affect a different part of the brain than fact-based arguments - they trigger feelings and emotions which guide actions



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# How do we tell compelling stories?



- Compelling content is the key to any social media activity that will inspire others to action.
- Competition for attention across social media is brutal with torrents of content and shrinking attention spans across different platforms.
- Social media is a visual form of communication - photos, videos, infographics, memes are used extensively.
- Top performing content across all platforms more and more often is video - think about ways you can use it.



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# Visuals are Key



Research shows that people remember...

**10%**  
of what they  
HEAR



**80%**  
of what they  
SEE and DO

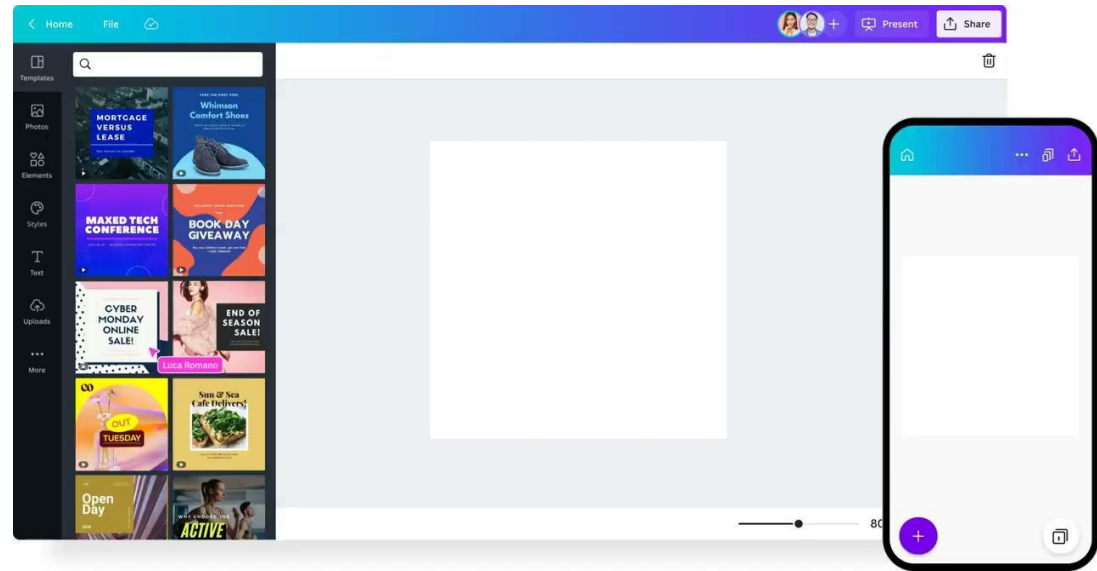
**20%**  
of what they  
READ



# Creating Your Own Visuals



- **Free Tools**
  - Canva
  - Google Suite
- **Premium Tools**
  - Adobe Creative Suite
- **Common Tools**
  - Microsoft Word
  - Powerpoint



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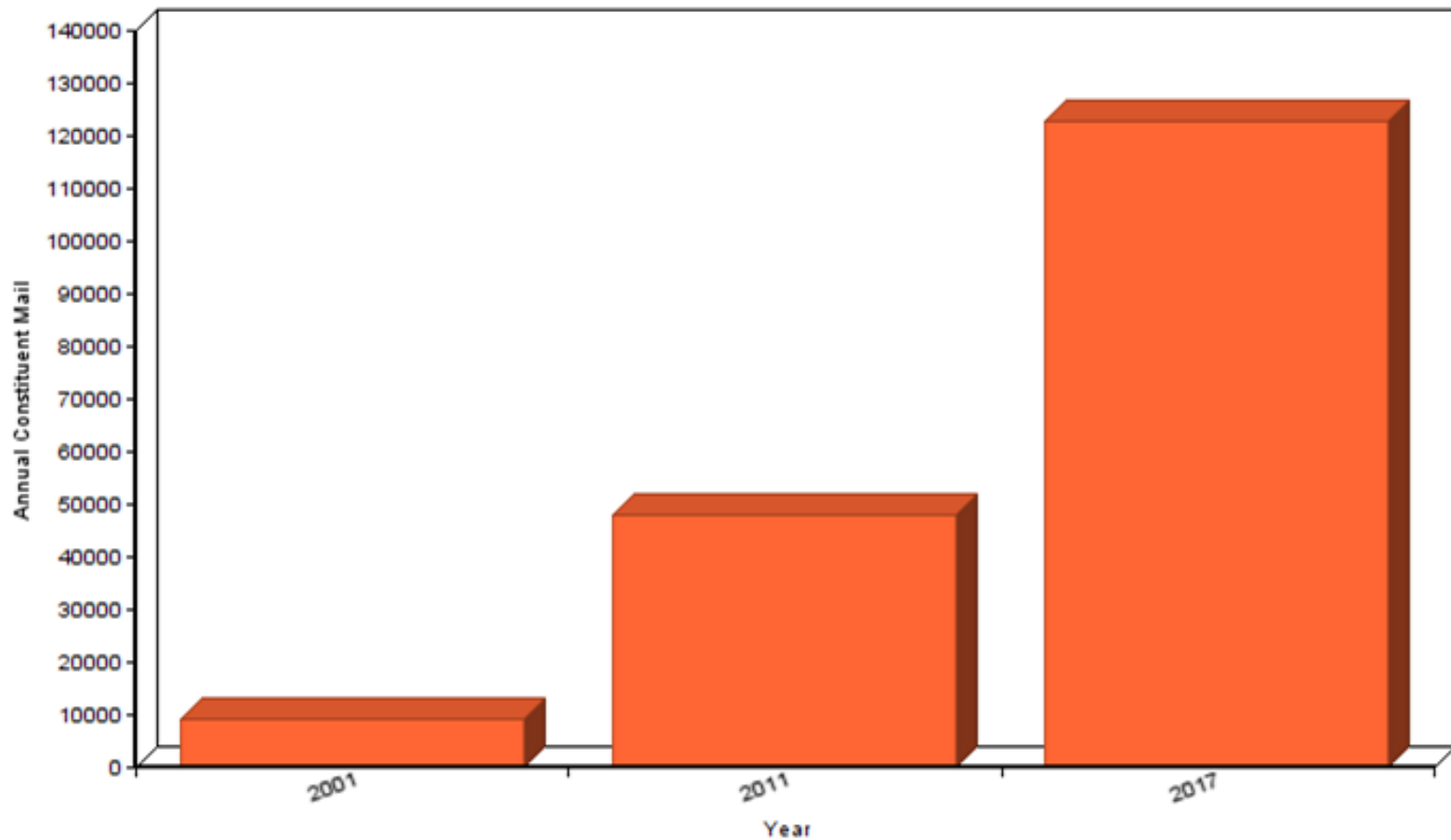
# Think Beyond Just Email












- Sending a message to Congress via web tools is still an important tactic – but it should be the *first* step of advocacy engagement.
- The number of communications that come into a lawmaker’s office is staggering and most are not personalized.
- Messages are tallied and reported – and the sponsoring organization is often known – but it’s not what *really* moves the needle.



Source: Congressional Management Foundation



**Average Annual Mail to House Offices up 13X from 2001**

 <p>Email</p>	 <p>Websites</p>	 <p>Text Messages &amp; SMS</p>
<p>Personalized, timely, clickable</p>	<p>Focused, enticing, SEO forward</p>	<p>Action oriented, personalized</p>
 <p>LinkedIn</p>	 <p>Facebook</p>	 <p>Twitter</p>
<p>Professional thought leadership</p>	<p>Relatable, thumb-stopping</p>	<p>Politics, journalists, news</p>
 <p>Instagram</p>	 <p>TikTok</p>	 <p>Others</p>
<p>Heartfelt, visually compelling, follows trends</p>	<p>Trend-aware, video, captions</p>	<p>Research, don't dive in head first...</p>

# Stories vs. Stats



Caitriona Uí Llwyd

@cafernblue



i still think my favourite thing that's ever happened to me on the internet is the time a guy said "people change their minds when you show them facts" and I said "actually studies show that's not true" and linked TWO sources and he said "yeah well I still think it works"

3:07 PM · Dec 10, 2019 · [Twitter for Android](#)

**33.8K** Retweets   **183.4K** Likes

# Tips & Tools



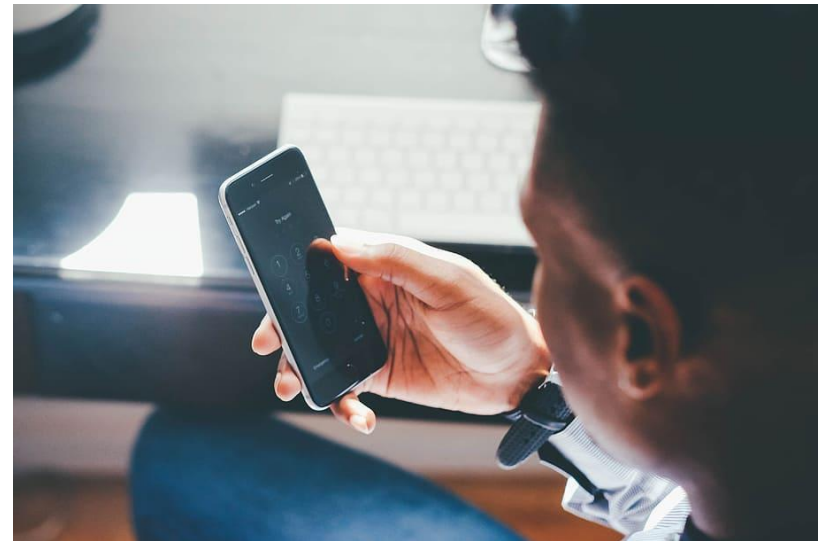


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# Social Media is Public Engagement



- Showing support and making requests via social media is the 21st century equivalent of sending a letter to the editor
- Mentioning the Rep. or Senator by name and tagging them on the platform is important
- Tagging pings whoever is monitoring the accounts for the office and will be noticed
- Be sure to use visuals and/or embedded media with your posts to drive engagement



# Social Media is Public Engagement



 **The ALS Association**   
@alsassociation

Thank you [@ChrisCoons](#), [@SenatorBraun](#) and all the senators on the ALS Caucus working together in Congress to help support the [#ALS](#) community.

 **Senator Chris Coons**  @ChrisCoons · Apr 19  
.@SenatorBraun and I are glad to announce the new roster for the bipartisan Senate ALS Caucus to continue working in Congress to fund and find the cure and help those living with ALS. [coons.senate.gov/news/press-rel...](https://coons.senate.gov/news/press-rel...)


9:34 AM · Apr 25, 2023 · 1,872 Views

# Social Media is Public Engagement



The ALS Association   
@alsassociation



ALS champions [@ChrisCoons](#) and [@SenBillCassidy](#) just released the Senate ALS Research Dear Colleague letter! Ask your US Senators to support [#ALS](#) research funding by signing on today: [bit.ly/40mcYep](https://bit.ly/40mcYep)   
[#FundALSResearch](#)



als.quorum.us

Urgent: Ask Your U.S. Senators to Sign Dear Colleague Let...  
ALS champions in the U.S. Senate introduced our annual  
ALS Appropriations Dear Colleague letter with the goal of ...

3:00 PM · Mar 27, 2023 · **1,279** Views

# Social Media is Public Engagement



## Take Action with the ALS Association

Through the active participation of people living with ALS and the broader community, we have made significant accomplishments together. Take action today and support us in our fight against ALS.

### Call Your Representative to Support ALS Research Funding 10 points

Call your U.S. Representative and ask them to support funding for ALS research in the 2024 federal budget.

Call

### Increase ALS Research Funding for 2024 Budget 3 points

Ask your member of Congress to increase ALS federal research funding!

Write

### Tweet Your Members of Congress to Support ALS Research Funding 2 points

Tweet your Members of Congress and ask them to support funding for ALS research in the 2024 federal budget.

Tweet

The screenshot shows the ALS Association website's navigation bar with the following links: About the ALS Association, Federal Advocacy, State Advocacy, Take Action, and Hello, ALS!. Below the navigation bar, there is a section titled "Tweet Your Members of Congress to Support ALS Research Funding". The text in this section reads: "If you have a Twitter account, please click the blue button next to each tweet to urge your U.S. Senators and U.S. Representative to support increased funding for ALS research. Once all 3 have been tweeted, click the 'All Finished!' button." To the right of this text is a box titled "To Tweet: Click Each Blue Button Below US Delegate Eleanor Norton". This box contains a text input field with the pre-filled text: "As your constituent & someone impacted by #ALS, I urge @eleanornorton to increase #ALSResearch in the FY2024 budget: als.org/2024ALSResearchFunding". To the right of the text input field is a blue button with a white Twitter bird icon and the word "Send". Below the text input field and the "Send" button is a large blue button with the text "All Finished!".

## Tweet Your Members of Congress to Support ALS Research Funding

If you have a Twitter account, please click the blue button next to each tweet to urge your U.S. Senators and U.S. Representative to support increased funding for ALS research.

Once all 3 have been tweeted, click the "All Finished!" button.

## To Tweet: Click Each Blue Button Below US Delegate Eleanor Norton

As your constituent & someone impacted by #ALS, I urge @eleanornorton to increase #ALSResearch in the FY2024 budget: als.org/2024ALSResearchFunding

Send

All Finished!

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# Creating Your Own Visuals



- ALS Association Canva graphics
  - Customize your own graphics using [templates provided by the ALS Association.](#)



# Tips to Improve Your Writing



<https://hemingwayapp.com/>

- Helps you keep it simple
- Aim for grades 6 – 9
- You can copy/paste into tool or write directly in it

A screenshot of the Hemingway Editor web application. The interface includes a top toolbar with options like Bold, Italic, H1, H2, H3, Quote, Bullets, Numbers, and Link. The main text area contains several paragraphs of sample text with various highlights: yellow for long sentences, red for complex sentences, purple for words that can be replaced, blue for adverbs, and green for passive voice. On the right side, there is a sidebar with the 'Hemingway Editor' logo, a 'Readability' section showing 'Grade 6' and 'Good', and a list of specific writing issues with counts and goals. The issues listed are: 2 adverbs (goal of 2 or fewer), 1 use of passive voice (goal of 2 or fewer), 1 phrase with a simpler alternative, 1 of 11 sentences that are hard to read, and 1 of 11 sentences that are very hard to read. The bottom right corner of the editor has 'Write' and 'Edit' buttons.

Bold Italic H1 H2 H3 Quote Bullets Numbers Link Write Edit

## Hemingway Editor

**Readability**  
Grade 6  
Good

Words: 133  
Show More ▾

- 2 adverbs, meeting the goal of 2 or fewer.
- 1 use of passive voice, meeting the goal of 2 or fewer.
- 1 phrase has a simpler alternative.
- 1 of 11 sentences is hard to read.
- 1 of 11 sentences is very hard to read.

**Hemingway App makes your writing bold and clear.**

The app highlights lengthy, complex sentences and common errors; if you see a yellow sentence, shorten or split it. If you see a red highlight, your sentence is so dense and complicated that your readers will get lost trying to follow its meandering, splitting logic — try editing this sentence to remove the red.

You can utilize a shorter word in place of a purple one. Mouse over them for hints.

Adverbs and weakening phrases are helpfully shown in blue. Get rid of them and pick words with force, perhaps.

Phrases in green have been marked to show passive voice.

You can format your text with the toolbar.

Paste in something you're working on and edit away. Or, click the Write button and compose something new.



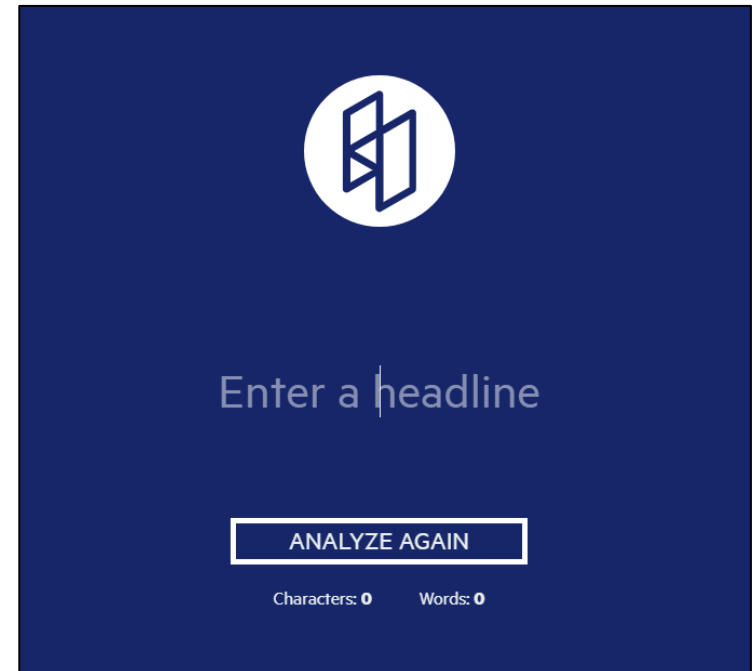
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# Tips to Improve Your Writing



<https://headlines.sharethrough.com/>

- Headline Analyzer
- Strengths & Suggestions
- Engagement Score
- Impression Score



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# Organizing Your Thoughts



## Google Docs

- Type in doc.new into Chrome
- Set headings for different sections
- Go to View > Show Document Outline
- For long documents, create anchor links

## Trello

- Organize your thoughts into different buckets
- Really good for web content from scratch
- Helps you brainstorm and gives you a place to save ideas for future content

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# ALS Association Action Center



- Become an ALS Association advocate at [als.org/actioncenter](https://als.org/actioncenter)
- Federal Advocacy Actions
- Logging interactions and actions taken



# ALS Association Action Center



**August is ALS Advocacy Action Month**

**ALS ASSOCIATION** | **ADVOCACY ACTION MONTH**

**8 Ways to Make a Change**

- Become an Advocate**  
Sign up to become an ALS Advocate at [als.org/advocate](https://als.org/advocate)
- Call your Representative**  
Call your Member's district office and let them know why increasing ALS research funding is important to you.
- Sign up for Text Alerts**  
Text "ALS" to 855-469-2621 to receive Advocacy text alerts.
- Write a Letter to the Editor**  
Write to news outlets to engage your community on increasing ALS research funding.
- Stop by your District Office**  
Drop-by and deliver information about ALS research funding to your Member of Congress.
- Share your ALS Story**  
Record your ALS story and share why increasing funding for ALS research is important to you.
- Send a Letter**  
Personalize our ALS funding research letter and send it to your Member of Congress.
- Use Social Media**  
Tweet your Member of Congress and ask them to increase ALS research funding.

Learn more at [als.org/advocacy](https://als.org/advocacy)

# Share Your Story



- Submit your ALS story at [www.als.org/share-your-als-story](http://www.als.org/share-your-als-story)
  - Written
  - Audio
  - Video
  - Images

A screenshot of a tweet from The ALS Association (@alsassociation). The tweet text reads: "Dawnn, an #ALSAdvocate participating in #ALS research, urges lawmakers to #FundALSResearch to find critical new treatments and a cure for the disease. Tell lawmakers how vital increased ALS research funding is TODAY: [bit.ly/Your-ALS-Story](https://bit.ly/Your-ALS-Story)". Below the text is a video player showing Dawnn Tucker, a woman with long dark hair, speaking. To her right is a group photo of a family of six people and three dogs (two black and white, one golden retriever) standing outdoors on a grassy area. The video player has a red progress bar and a timestamp of 2:40. The ALS Association logo is visible in the bottom right corner of the video player frame.

**ALS** The ALS Association ✓  
@alsassociation

Dawnn, an #ALSAdvocate participating in #ALS research, urges lawmakers to #FundALSResearch to find critical new treatments and a cure for the disease. Tell lawmakers how vital increased ALS research funding is TODAY: [bit.ly/Your-ALS-Story](https://bit.ly/Your-ALS-Story) ✓

**Dawnn Tucker**  
Nebraska

**ALS**  
ASSOCIATION

2:40



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# Share Your Story





Questions? Comments?

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**Thank You!**

