



#PledgeGAPAGAPA

"Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Wherever men or women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must—at that moment—become the center of the universe." ~ Elie Wiesel, Nobel Laureate, Author and Holocaust Survivor



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About #PledgeGAPAGAPA

Are you ready to go Greek?! This school year, we're asking you to [#PledgeGAPAGAPA](#) to commit to genocide prevention and help us advocate for the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act (GAPA). It's simple: Gather your friends, classmates, coworkers, and family, and let the world know that you're a GAPA Brother, Sister, or Sibling.

Recognizing that genocide and mass atrocities threaten both the national security and the moral values of the U.S., GAPA would ensure the U.S. utilizes all available tools to emphasize early warning and prevention of such crimes. [#PledgeGAPAGAPA](#) with us to ensure the passage of this crucial legislation!

This Toolkit will provide you with ideas for mobilizing your campus or community to [#PledgeGAPAGAPA](#)!

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Mobilizing your Campus or Community

About the Elie Wiesel Act (GAPA)

The Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act (GAPA) is an essential piece of legislation focused on preventing genocide and mass atrocities. This legislation would:

- **Create a Mass Atrocities Task Force** to convey information and policy recommendations to Congress regarding the assessment of global risks and the prevention of atrocities;
- **Require training for Foreign Service Officers** in conflict and atrocities prevention; and
- **Institutionalize the Complex Crises Fund**, a flexible fund that can be used to prevent and respond to emerging conflicts.

Right now, we have a unique opportunity to urge the U.S. Congress to pass a piece of legislation that will ensure that the United States will continue to identify and respond to emerging atrocities for years to come. There are many ways to run a successful campaign in your community - but step one is to inform people and gain attention for your case. To learn more about GAPA, check out our one-pager in the appendix!

Suggestion 1: Hold a General Interest Meeting

- Explain what the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act is and why it is so important!
- Share initial thoughts on ways to mobilize your campus and open a discussion with meeting attendees on additional ideas
- Food always brings people to meetings--bring cookies or brownies!

Suggestion 2: Table on Your Campus or in Your Community

- Educate a larger population beyond your club or friend group
- Collect signatures for STAND's #PledgeGAPAGAPA!
- Snap some photos! Encourage passersby to participate in our photo campaign and then tweet the pictures to your member of Congress using the hashtag #PledgeGAPAGAPA! You can use our photo template, available here, or make your own!

Suggestion 3: Write an Op-Ed in your School/Local Newspaper

Op-Eds are a great way to not only provide readers with information, but to clearly express an opinion on a current issue! Op-Eds have enormous influence in bringing awareness to relevant issues, and have the potential to reach large numbers of people and perhaps even influence public opinion and policy. See page 5 for op-ed tips and talking points

Suggestion 4: Take a Direct Action!

Dropping a banner from a building, chalk graffiti, and flyering are great ways to draw attention to a particular issue, both on campus and through social media! Get creative with ways to inform your community - and don't forget to send us pics so we can help publicize too!

Protip: Create a Twitter for your STAND for your STAND chapter or human rights club to tweet these out as you collect them! Follow @standnow and we will follow you back!



Advocacy

There are many ways to advocate, some more effective than others, but all influential in their own way. These include petitions, calling or writing to your Member(s) of Congress, engaging Members of Congress on social media, and—our favorite—meeting with your Congressional office in person, either in DC or in your home district! Want advice? Contact us at info@standnow.org and we'll be glad to connect you with your Field Organizer to talk it through!

#PledgeGAPAGAPA

We've launched a [petition](#) to Congress to ask individual Senators and Representatives to co-sponsor GAPA. We plan to hand-deliver these signatures on Capitol Hill to show vast constituent support for these issues - but if we want to be successful, we'll need your help collecting signatures!

Have a STAND chapter or a human rights club? Are you in an international politics class? Or maybe you just have a super rad history teacher who will let you pitch it at the beginning of class. Here's some ideas to help you with signature collection:

- Set up a table in your campus center or cafeteria for a few days to collect signatures. You can have a laptop or two available for folks to sign digitally, or collect signatures by hand by using the form in the appendix. This is also a prime opportunity for you to talk about STAND and recruit new members to your chapter! Remember, the more attention the petition, the more momentum and leverage we'll have going into our offline actions!
- Share on social media, asking your friends to sign and share as well
- Go door-to-door in your dorm and ask folks to sign
- Visit a crowded dining hall with your petition and go table-to-table asking for signatures - bring a friend or two for moral support!
- Ask your teacher(s)/professor(s) to let you pitch the petition before or after class to explain and collect signatures
- Meet with likeminded clubs on campus such as Amnesty International, cultural/heritage groups, religious groups, social justice organizations, etc. and ask them to support the petition and send to their members to sign. They may even join your campaign as a formal partner!

Sample Pitch

Hi, I'm [\[your name\]](#) and I'm with STAND: The Student-Led Movement to End Mass Atrocities. I'm going around collecting signatures of support for a piece of legislation called the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act, which would improve the United States' ability to prevent and respond to emerging atrocity issues around the world. Would you sign our petition to [\[Senator/Representative ____\]](#)?

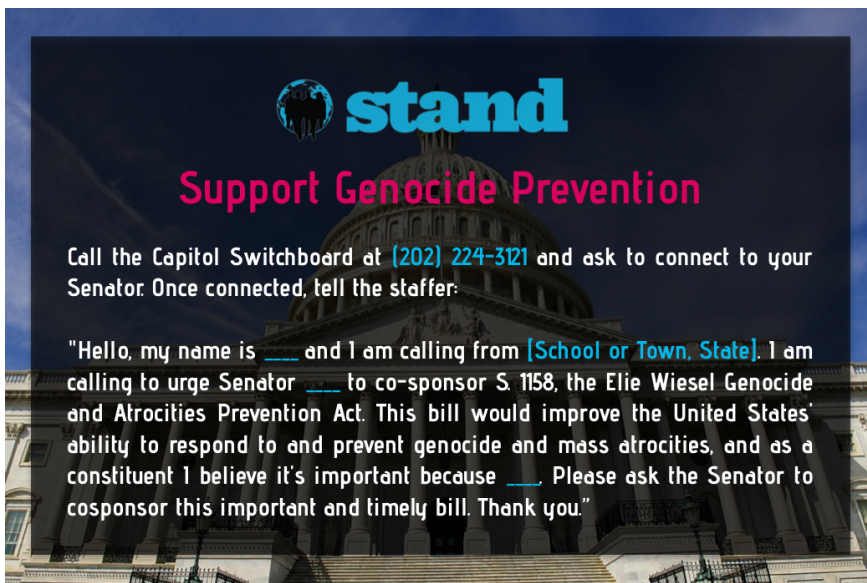
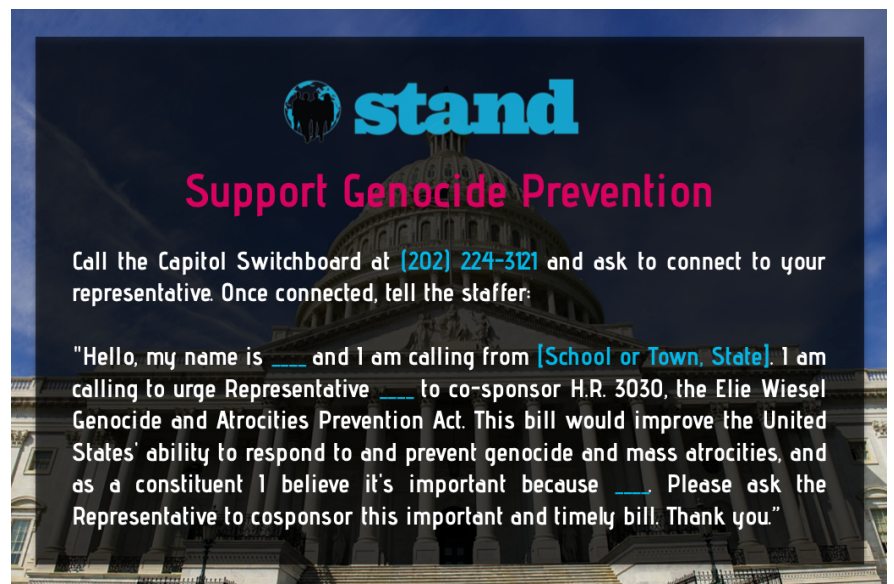


Calling Your Members of Congress

Organize your chapter/club/friend group and call in to your Representative and/or Senators' offices asking for their support of GAPA. We have sample scripts below, but feel free to mix it up. Remember, when you call you'll be speaking with an intern or a staff member, so don't be worried, they are there to speak to constituents! Call-ins are a great way to get an issue on your Congressperson's radar, and you can complement this by letter-writing, social media advocacy, and in-person lobbying.

By the end of the call, you'll have left your Congressperson with a tangible way to become a leader on atrocities prevention. That'll be a great foundation to build on when you and your chapter visit your Congressperson on Lobby Day!

Note: STAND National is targeting House Representatives in the fall, and Senators in the spring.

A graphic with a background image of the US Capitol dome. At the top, there is a logo with a globe icon and the word "stand" in blue. Below the logo, the text "Support Genocide Prevention" is written in pink. The main text is in white and reads: "Call the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask to connect to your Senator. Once connected, tell the staffer: 'Hello, my name is ____ and I am calling from [School or Town, State]. I am calling to urge Senator ____ to co-sponsor S. 1158, the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act. This bill would improve the United States' ability to respond to and prevent genocide and mass atrocities, and as a constituent I believe it's important because _____. Please ask the Senator to cosponsor this important and timely bill. Thank you.'"A graphic with a background image of the US Capitol dome. At the top, there is a logo with a globe icon and the word "stand" in blue. Below the logo, the text "Support Genocide Prevention" is written in pink. The main text is in white and reads: "Call the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask to connect to your representative. Once connected, tell the staffer: 'Hello, my name is ____ and I am calling from [School or Town, State]. I am calling to urge Representative ____ to co-sponsor H.R. 3030, the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act. This bill would improve the United States' ability to respond to and prevent genocide and mass atrocities, and as a constituent I believe it's important because _____. Please ask the Representative to cosponsor this important and timely bill. Thank you.'"

Write an Op-Ed or a Letter to the Editor (LTE)!

Getting published in a campus or local newspaper is one of the most effective ways to have your voice heard. Every time your Representative's name is mentioned in the media, the article goes out to the full office staff. No elected official likes bad press, so if you write a convincing piece as a constituent about why you care about GAPA, it may be just the push they need to sign on!

How to write an op-ed:

Op-Eds are articles written expressing the author's opinion. They are longer than a Letter to the Editor (LTE) and allow for more opinion, but can be harder to get printed in a paper. If you have the time, we suggest you start with an op-ed - we can help you research papers that may publish you, and can help you edit your piece so that it will be more strongly considered. Just write to us at info@standnow.org! Here's some tips to get you started:

1. **Know the paper's style.** Every paper has different expectations. The average is usually about 400 – 750 words, but look at the op-eds in your paper to see what is typical; don't exceed that. Be careful to follow all requirements set by newspaper.
2. **Pull people in.** Op-eds should begin with a lead, similar to that of a feature piece in a newspaper, which grabs the reader and pulls them into the piece. You can be more stylistic in op-eds than in letters or press releases, but the language should remain straightforward.
3. **Look into ghostwriting.** Ghostwriting refers to writing a column that another person signs. Because op-eds are difficult to get printed, it may be a good idea to ask a local celebrity or elected official to sign an op-ed that you ghostwrite.
4. **Keep it timely.** Be careful not to simply give basic background about the issue; focus on the most current aspect and policies being debated. Unlike letters, op-eds do not have to always be written in response to something specific, but they should still reference the situation in the most current way possible.
5. **Mention your elected officials.** Always try to bring up your elected officials by name, praising or criticizing them their policies, and give specific steps that the official can take next. Writing about elected officials may make it more likely for an op-ed to get printed.
6. **It's okay to provide lists.** Many effective op-eds include lists of steps that the reader (or elected officials) should take.
7. **Include a website.** Along with steps to take, readers should be presented with a website to go to for further learning. Telling readers to go www.standnow.org is an easy way to do this.
8. **Include contact info.** Editors usually call you to confirm authorship, so don't forget to include your phone number in your submission.



SAMPLE PITCH:

Dear Editor,

My name is _____, I am a [student/am from] [town/state connection] and I am writing to submit an op-ed urging [Senator/Representative] to co-sponsor the Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act. This legislation will improve the ability of the US to respond to and prevent genocide and mass atrocities. [If you can, add something that references your local area].

Thank you very much for your time and consideration!

All the best,
[Your Name]

Ask us for help! If you want guidance while writing an Op-Ed, or just want another pair of eyes to take a look at it, e-mail info@standnow.org with your column.

How to write a Letter to the Editor (LTEs)

A Letter to the Editor is a letter sent to the editors of a newspaper about materials that have appeared in the publication or issues of concern to the leadership. Letters to the Editor are an effective way of quickly telling people about an issue you care about.

You can write Letters to the Editor:

1. In response to something the newspaper has covered or ignored.
2. To call on your member of Congress to act. Local papers are very interested in members of Congress and they are likely to print anything that focuses on a locally elected official.
3. To campaign for an official endorsement from the paper's editorial board. Local papers can have an immense effect on readers (for example, on Election Day, readers often bring editorial page with them into the ballot box). Blitzing the newspaper with similar letters to the editor, though they won't all be printed, can lead to an endorsement of some strong anti-genocide action, like school/state divestment or a vote in Congress.

Here are some tips that will help you get your letter in the paper:

1. **Keep it short.** Every paper has different expectations, but the average is around 300 words; don't exceed that. Be careful to follow all requirements set by your newspaper.
2. **Get to the point.** Letters to the editor should focus on one specific ask or criticism. Letters should get to the point quickly, stating it as clearly as possible.
3. **Bring your point home.** When writing a letter, you should relate it to yourself and the community as much as possible. Student writers should identify themselves as such – it adds a lot to the letter. Incorporate the school/community into the letter as much as you can.
4. **Include ways to take action.** Always give readers a way to get involved in the movement, whether it be donating to civilian protection, calling their Senator and asking them to support the Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act, or attending your next meeting.



5. Mention your elected officials. Always try to bring up your elected officials, praising or criticizing them for their action to end genocide, and give specific steps that the official can take next.

6. Represent a large group of people. Sometimes writing on behalf of a large group of students can strengthen your point. You can use phrases like, "Students at George Washington University stand against genocide, and this administration should too."

7. Include your contact info. Editors usually have to call you to confirm authorship, so don't forget to include your phone number and email address in your submission.

Ask us for help! If you want guidance while writing , or just want another pair of eyes to take a look at it, e-mail info@standnow.org with your column.

Op-Ed/LTE Talking Points:

Please use as many of these talking points as are useful for your op-ed. **Be sure to mention your target(s) by name and highlight the ASK:** you want your Members of Congress to co-sponsor the Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act. By mentioning Senators and Representatives by name in a publication, you are ensuring the full office staff knows your stance. Outside of actually in-person lobbying, **newspaper mentions are by far the most effective way of ensuring your voice is heard in the office(s).**

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- While the U.S. has traditionally waited until atrocities have emerged to respond, early prevention is a far better strategy, not only because it vastly reduces the number of civilians harmed in the conflict but also because:
 - Preventing atrocities is a vital national security interest, as atrocities destabilize regions, create power vacuums enabling violent extremism, damage American moral leadership, and harm international American business.
 - Preventing violent conflict around the world protects American troops who may have otherwise been sent abroad to fight in preventable wars.
 - According to a recent report by the humanitarian organization Mercy Corps, "Just ten years ago, about 80 percent of humanitarian aid went to helping the victims of natural disasters. Yet today, 80 percent of aid is going to people whose lives have been turned upside down by conflict. The change has been so dramatic that the World Bank now recognizes conflict as the primary cause of poverty and human suffering -- not just one among various causes."



- A focus on atrocity prevention not only protects millions of civilians from genocide and atrocity crimes, but it also stabilizes weak states, promotes U.S. national security, prevents refugee flows, and saves the U.S. millions of dollars in after-the-fact humanitarian assistance.
 - According to the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), the international community would save \$2.94 trillion over 10 years if it increased funding to reduce risks of future violence, and if countries in conflict received increased funding for peacebuilding activities, the cost of conflict would be reduced by \$16 for every \$1 invested.
 - A study by UNDP [The UN Development Programme] found that for every \$1 spent on prevention, the world saves \$10 in recovery costs.
 - According to research by the Friends Committee on National Legislation, preventing war is 60 times cheaper than fighting it.
- The Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act (House Resolution (H.R.) 3030/Senate Bill (S.) 1158) would:
 - **Ensure effective high-level coordination on prevention:** The establishment of a Mass Atrocities Task Force, would ensure effective prioritization of prevention and increase coordination between government agencies on genocide and atrocity prevention efforts.
 - **Save money:** Institutionalizing the Complex Crises Fund would allow the United States to continue flexibly funding quick responses to unforeseen crises, which have proven effective in places like the Central African Republic, Jordan, and Guinea.
 - **Protect our troops by prioritizing diplomacy and peacebuilding:** Requiring atrocity prevention training for U.S. Foreign Service Officers would increase our capability to identify warning signs of mass atrocities and intervene before they occur and to use all tools available to mitigate violence through U.S. Embassy engagement.
 - History of U.S. action for genocide and atrocity prevention:
 - The United States was the first country in the world to sign the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, signed in Paris on December 9, 1948, and with implementing legislation signed by President Ronald Reagan on November 25, 1988.
 - In the 2006 National Security Strategy, President George W. Bush highlighted the “moral imperative that states take action to prevent and punish genocide.”
 - In 2008, the bipartisan Genocide Prevention Task Force (GPTF), led by former Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen and former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, released a report highlighting genocide prevention and mitigation as a national priority and setting forth recommendations for improving the U.S. government's role in responding to and preventing genocide and mass atrocities. Recommendation 1-3 called on the president to “create a standing interagency mechanism for analysis of threats of genocide and mass atrocities and consideration of appropriate preventative action.”
 - The Senate has long supported U.S. leadership in atrocity prevention. In December 2010, the Senate unanimously passed S.Con.Res.71, a bipartisan bill calling for an interagency committee dedicated to preventing genocide and mass atrocities; directing agencies to evaluate their ability to anticipate, prevent, and respond to genocide and mass atrocities; and recognizing the value of flexible funding for emerging crises.
 - In 2012, President Barack Obama established the Atrocities Prevention Board (APB) to fulfill this recommendation. The Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act seeks to strengthen past efforts and bolster Congressional oversight on U.S. government efforts to prevent and mitigate genocide and mass atrocities.



- Case Studies of U.S. engagement in atrocities prevention:
 - **Central African Republic:** When violent clashes began between Muslims and Christians following the 2012 coup, the APB was able to quickly mobilize Complex Crises funding to implement peacebuilding programs. The situation in the country gradually improved, and last year the Central African Republic held peaceful and successful elections.
 - **Burundi:** With the understanding that the 2015 elections would likely be a flashpoint for violence, \$7 million was allocated in 2014 to support programs to build dialogue between groups and support local leaders, as well as to implement mechanisms to monitor impending violence. When President Nkurunziza decided to stay in power, violence did break out. However, unlike previous cases in Burundi, full-scale conflict and atrocities did not emerge and the conflict has largely remained political rather than ethnic.
 - **Guinea:** In the year prior to the 2013 outbreak of Ebola in Guinea, over 200 people had been killed in the country's forest region. Recognizing that the strain from Ebola could exacerbate conflict and that conflict would obstruct efforts to combat ebola, the Complex Crises Fund allocated money for reconciliation programs. Ultimately, the scale of the conflict reduced and Guinea was declared free of ebola in 2015.
 - **Iraq:** The Yazidis, an Iraqi religious minority, have been one of the groups most aggressively targeted by ISIS, and in 2014 ISIS trapped tens of thousands of civilians on Mt. Sinjar, seemingly prepared to conduct mass executions. Using the APB's coordination and provision of information, the U.S. was able to quickly implement airstrikes to protect Yazidi civilians.
- Key quotes:
 - "We gather today to bear witness to the past and learn from its awful example and to make sure that we're not condemned to relive its crimes... After the [Second World War], the nations of the world came together and drafted the genocide convention as a howl of anguish and an effort to prevent and punish future acts of genocide." - President Ronald Reagan, remarks on the signing of the Genocide Convention Implementation Act of 1987, November 4, 1988.
 - "The freedom we enjoy carries a profound responsibility. Now the victims of other human rights abuses call to us daily from across the globe. In the memory of the millions who died, we must not forget. We must not close our hearts. We must not fail to act." -President George H.W. Bush, remarks at the Simon Wiesenthal Center Dinner, June 16, 1991.
 - "We owe to all the people in the world our best efforts to organize ourselves so that we can maximize the chances of preventing these events. And where they cannot be prevented, we can more more quickly to minimize the horror." -President Bill Clinton, address to genocide survivors at the Kigali airport in Rwanda, March 25, 1998.
 - "[...]the words 'never again' do not refer to the past - they refer to the future." - President George W. Bush, remarks at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, April 18, 2007.



- “In wars and conflicts there are individual persons, our brothers and sisters, men and women, young and old, boys and girls who weep, suffer and die... ‘The most basic understanding of human dignity compels [us]... to stop and to prevent further systematic violence against ethnic and religious minorities’ and to protect innocent peoples.” -Pope Francis, speech at the UN General Assembly, September 2015
- Elie Wiesel Quotes
 - “For the dead and the living, we must bear witness. For not only are we responsible for the memories of the dead, we are also responsible for what we are doing with those memories.”
 - “We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Wherever men or women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must—at that moment—become the center of the universe.”
 - “There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.”
 - “A destruction, an annihilation that only man can provoke, only man can prevent,”
- Reasons to support GAPA include:
 - It ensures efficient high-level interagency coordination on atrocity prevention,
 - It saves money (According to the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), if countries in conflict received increased funding for peacebuilding activities, the cost of conflict would be reduced by \$16 for every \$1 currently invested. Also according to the IEP, the international community would save \$2.94 trillion over 10 years if it increased funding to reduce risks of future violence),
 - It protects our troops and builds on bipartisan consensus.

