***How to call your Senator/Representative to ask him/her to support the Cogswell Macy Act:***

1. Call the Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121, or search online to find contact information for your Senator/Representative (list provided, below, for Illinois).
2. You are very unlikely to actually speak to your congress person – it will almost always be a member of his/her staff who answer the phone (or an answering machine). If you like, you can ask to speak to the staffer in the office who works on special education issues.  *Here are two suggested scripts, but feel free to improvise!*
	1. If you are calling a ***Representative’s office***, you can say: “Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I’m a resident of \_\_\_\_\_ (city), \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (state).  I’m calling to ask Representative \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (name of Representative) to co-sponsor the Cogswell-Macy Act - H.R. 5748. I support this bill because it will improve access to important education and services for children who are blind or visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, or deafblind. I am hoping to find out Representative \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s position on this bill.”
	2. If you are calling a ***Senator’s office***, you can say: “Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I’m a resident of \_\_\_\_\_ (city), \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (state).  I’m calling to ask Senator \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (name of Senator) to co-sponsor the Cogswell-Macy Act, bipartisan legislation which was introduced in the Senate as S. 2945. I support this bill because it will improve access to important education and services for children who are blind or visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, or deafblind. I am hoping to find out Senator \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s position on this bill.”
	3. If you’re leaving a message on an answering machine, you may want to provide your phone number or email address so that the office can get back to you.
3. If they ask for more information (or if you want to provide more details), you can mention that the Cogswell-Macy Act will:
	1. Ensure that every student with sensory disabilities is properly identified, evaluated and served regardless of their formal disability category or classification so that all such students, including those with additional disabilities, can truly receive a free and appropriate public education.
	2. Expect states to conduct strategic planning, and commit such planning to writing, to guarantee that all students with sensory disabilities within each state receive all specialized instruction and services needed by such students provided by properly trained personnel.
	3. Ramp up U.S. Department of Education responsibilities to monitor and report on states’ compliance with their obligations with respect to instruction and services specifically provided to students with sensory disabilities.
	4. Assist parents and educators of students with sensory disabilities through regular and up-to-date written policy guidance from the U.S. Department of Education.
	5. Establish a national collaborative organizational resource, the Anne Sullivan Macy Center on Vision Loss and Educational Excellence, to proliferate evidence-based practices in the education of students with vision loss, to keep special educators current with the latest instructional methods, and to supplement state and local educational agency provision of the instruction and services constituting the Expanded Core Curriculum, the full array of specialized services and skills that students with vision loss need.
4. Don't be disappointed if you only talk to a receptionist or if you get their voicemail; the fact that you are their constituent and are taking the time to bring the Cogswell-Macy Act to their attention is what it's all about. Once you've made your calls, we'd love to hear how it went, so please give us a call or drop us a note at mrichert@afb.net Thank you for your advocacy for children who are blind or visually impaired!