



Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act (ELSA) COMMUNITY ADVOCACY GUIDE

Welcome, and thank you for stepping up to support the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act (ELSA)! Your voice is a powerful tool in the fight to ensure individuals born with clefts and other congenital conditions have access to the comprehensive medical care they need.

This guide is designed to equip you to raise awareness and drive support for ELSA in your community — from clear talking points and ready-to-share social media posts to a printable sign and outreach tips. Whether you're hosting an event, meeting with lawmakers, or simply sharing your story, this guide will help you advocate confidently and effectively.

Together, we can turn compassion into action and push ELSA across the finish line.



To learn more about how Smile Train is supporting this important legislation, visit smiletrain.org/advocacy.

Please reach out to community@smiletrain.org with any questions!



Talking Points

To help you speak confidently and clearly about the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act (ELSA) and the way it affects access to care for individuals with clefts and other congenital conditions, here are key talking points you can use in conversations, emails, meetings, or public events.

The Problem

- In the US today, access to timely, medically recommended cleft care depends more on where a child lives than on their actual medical needs.
- Insurance companies may cover initial surgeries — but they often deny critical follow-up treatments by labeling them “cosmetic,” even when doctors deem them essential.
- Commonly denied cleft-related treatments include orthodontics, speech therapy, ear tubes, bone grafts, and jaw surgeries.
- These denials have serious long-term consequences, which can include delayed speech, chronic ear issues, jaw misalignment, and more.

The Solution

- The Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act (ELSA), H.R. 3277/S. 1677, is a federal bill designed to close the insurance gap for children with clefts and other congenital conditions.
- ELSA requires private health insurance to cover medically necessary dental, orthodontic, prosthodontic, and surgical treatments — care that is too often wrongly denied.
- It puts treatment decisions back where they belong: in the hands of doctors, not insurance companies.
- ELSA ensures children and adults with clefts and other congenital conditions receive the full care they need to grow, speak, smile, and thrive.
- Visit **smiletrain.org/advocacy** to share your story with your legislators, learn how to advocate for change, download outreach templates and other resources, and help ensure every child has access to the care they need.





Ways to drive engagement within your own networks

Here are some simple yet powerful ways you can advocate for the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act (ELSA) within your own networks and help drive meaningful change. No matter your background or experience, every action — big or small - brings us one step closer to ensuring lasting smiles for all.



Contact Your Members of Congress: Visit smiletrain.org/advocacy to send emails urging your US Senators and Representatives to support ELSA.



Share Your Story: If you or a loved one has been affected by a cleft or another congenital condition, share your experience to personalize the importance of ELSA.



Post on Social Media: Use pre-written posts and graphics from this guide to spread awareness across your platforms. Tag your legislators and use hashtags like #PassELSA and #EnsuringLastingSmiles.



Host a Community Event: Organize a local gathering, virtual info session, or awareness walk to educate your community and rally support.



Display Advocacy Materials: Put up signs or posters in your home, workplace, school, or local businesses to spark conversations and spread visibility.



Write a Letter to the Editor: Submit a letter to your local newspaper highlighting the need for ELSA and how it will impact families in your community.



Engage Local Leaders: Meet with school boards, city councils, or community organizations to ask for public support or resolutions in favor of ELSA.



Encourage Others to Act: Invite friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors to get involved — whether by sharing a post, attending an event, or contacting their legislators.



Collaborate with Local Media: Reach out to reporters or news outlets with story pitches about ELSA or local families affected by congenital anomalies.



Use Your Skills: Whether you're a graphic designer, teacher, organizer, or medical professional — bring your unique talents to the movement to help amplify its reach.

Considering an idea but not sure about the next steps?

We're here to help! Reach out to us any time at community@smiletrain.org.



Downloadable Sign

Print this “selfie sign” and take a photo of yourself holding it. Post it on social media to help spread the word and show your support for the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act (ELSA)! Don’t forget to use hashtags like #EnsuringLastingSmilesAct #ELSA #clefts #SmileTrain, and tag your members of Congress to encourage action. Every post helps raise awareness and brings us closer to change!



I Am Advocating
for the
Ensuring
Lasting
Smile
Act!



H.R. 3277/S. 1677

Join me!

smiletrain.org/advocacy

Download [here](#)



Graphics Toolkit

Below is language you can consider including in any social media posts you share to encourage your networks to join you in supporting ELSA. If you're comfortable, we always encourage you to share your personal story and photos. You can also download the easily shareable graphic below to help spread the word even further.

- Speak up for children born with clefts and other congenital conditions. Every child deserves access to medically necessary care — ELSA helps make that possible by ensuring insurance coverage for treatment. Join us and take action for fair, lasting smiles! Learn more: smiletrain.org/advocacy
[#advocacy](#) [#EnsuringLastingSmilesAct](#) [#ELSA](#) [#clefts](#)
- Join me in supporting [#ELSA](#), important legislation that will ensure that children with clefts and other congenital conditions have access to medically necessary care. Visit smiletrain.org/advocacy to reach out to your legislators today!
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