

Contacting Your Representatives



Tips for Making Your Communications Impactful

Know your officials and their positions: Research your representatives' stances, committee assignments, and voting history to craft the most effective message. Thank them for past actions if applicable.

Identify yourself as a constituent: Always lead with information about where you live and vote so that your representative knows you have the power to hold them accountable in the voting booth. Representatives are generally only concerned with their own constituents.

Be clear and concise: State your purpose immediately (e.g., "I'm calling to support... because...").

Be specific: Mention bill numbers, policies, or specific actions you want lawmakers to take. Limit your request to one issue at a time.

Use personal stories: Explain how the policy in question affects you, your family, your business, your neighbors, your clients, and/or your community.

Use data: Quantify the impact of the policy. How many individuals, families, children, educations, jobs, or dollars are impacted?

Stay polite and professional: Even if you disagree, remain respectful to have a better chance of engagement.

Thank them: For their time, for listening and considering, for past support, for fighting for what's right.

Follow up: If your representatives commit to an action, check back to see if they followed through. Send a thank-you note if they keep their word.

Organize to multiply your impact: When it comes to contacts, quantity matters; align your contact with calls to action from advocacy groups or lead the charge and organize. Share your progress with your networks to inspire others to act.

Tips for Making Contact

In-Person Meetings (Office Visits, Meetings, Town Halls): *Face-to-face advocacy is the most effective*

- For a meeting, schedule an appointment – Call or email ahead to book time with the official or, if unavailable, with staff (also effective!): [Sample Scheduling Request Email](#)
- Prepare talking points – Be ready with 2-4 concise points to make your case. Bring notes if needed.
- Make a clear ask – Can we count on your support for...
- Consider bringing supporting materials – Data, petitions, images, or personal stories can help.
- Stay on topic – Officials have limited time, so be clear and concise.
- Follow up with a thank-you email to reinforce your message.

Phone Calls: *Direct, quick, and often prioritized by staff*

- Call the local office first (they may be more responsive than the D.C. office).
- Don't be discouraged to talk with staff rather than officials--they have real influence!
- Identify yourself as a constituent ("I live in [your city/ZIP code]").
- Be prepared – Have a script or bullet points ready.
- Keep it brief – Staffers are busy, so a 30-second to 1-minute message is ideal.
- State the issue and action clearly – ("I urge Senator Smith to support [Bill XYZ]").
- Be polite and professional – Even if the official disagrees, respectful communication is more effective.
- Template: "Hi, my name is [Your Name], and I live in [City, ZIP Code]. I'm calling to urge [Representative/Senator] to support [Bill Name/Issue] because [brief personal reason]. Thank you!"

Emails: *Easy to send, provides a written record, and can include detailed information.* **Template**

- Use a clear subject line (e.g., "Support [Bill XYZ] – Constituent Concern").
- Be personal – Avoid generic templates; share a personal story or connection.
- Keep it short – Officials get many emails, so 2-3 short paragraphs work best.
- Include a call to action – Clearly state what you want them to do.
- Use your full name and address – It proves you are a constituent.
- Avoid active links as they are sometimes flagged by spam filters.
- Follow up if you don't receive a response.

Letters and Postcards: *More rare and personal, show work and care, and can stand out*

- Write legibly (typed letters work too).
- Use proper titles (e.g., "The Honorable [Title, Name]").
- Be concise – Keep it to one page/postcard length.
- Include your return address so they can respond.
- Send it to the local office for a quicker reply.