

Calling Your Elected Official

Calling your elected official is a quick and easy way to voice your support for, or opposition to, an issue. Phone calls can be particularly effective when elected officials are making an important decision—like voting for or against a bill.

Prepare Before You Call

Who will you talk to? It is unlikely that you will talk to your elected official on the phone. You will probably speak to a staff member employed by the official.

What is your ask? What would you like your elected official to do? State your request clearly and directly. For example: I am calling today to ask Congressman Smith to vote no on H.R. 1.

What does your elected official think about the issue? Do your research and try to find out if he or she has taken a position on the issue or if they have a reason to agree or disagree with you. Find information to support your position and consider questions you might be asked. If possible, be prepared to provide answers. If you do not have an answer to a question, that is ok. You can always offer to find the answer and get back to the staffer.

What will you say? Before you call your elected official, it is helpful to prepare by drafting a script. A script will help you gather your thoughts so you know exactly what you want to say to the staffer who answers your call.

Draft Call Script

Hello.

My name is _____ and I am a constituent of Senator/Representative _____. I am calling today in regards to (bill name/bill number/issue).

I want to share my support/opposition for _____. This is important to me because... (Describe why the issue matters to you, share a short personal story or experience).

Do you know how Senator/Representative _____ feels about this issue?

[Pause for Feedback]

Thank you for that information. As I mentioned I support/oppose _____.

May I share my contact information in case I can be a resource on this issue?

Thank you.

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Tips for a Successful Call

Do not be nervous: Elected officials and staff members appreciate hearing from constituents and gathering information on important issues.

Treat staff with respect. Staff members are the eyes and ears for the official. The opportunity to speak with staff is equally as valuable as speaking with your elected official.

Keep the call brief. Staff can spend hours on the phone every day, so be as brief and clear as possible.

Do not yell or get defensive. Despite your passion about an issue, you are unlikely to get a positive response if you yell or attack the elected official or staff member.

Do not make up an answer to a question. If you do not know something, ask for the staffer's contact information and let them know you will follow up when you find the answer.

Contact Information

U.S. Senate

www.senate.gov/senators

White House

www.whitehouse.gov/contact

U.S. House of Representatives

www.house.gov/representatives

U.S. Mayors

www.usmayors.org/mayors/meet-the-mayors

State Legislators

www.congress.gov/state-legislatures-websites

County Information

<http://explorer.naco.org/>

State Governors

www.usa.gov/state-governor

Other Local Information

www.usa.gov/local-governments