

EFFECTIVELY ENGAGING WITH YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

How to use your voice and take action

AGENDA -

1. TELLING YOUR STORY
2. CALLING YOUR REPRESENTATIVE
3. WRITING TO YOUR REPRESENTATIVE
4. ATTEND A TOWN HALL
 - VIRTUAL OR IN PERSON
5. SOCIAL MEDIA



TELLING YOUR STORY

How to make your call
or letter personal and
effective

TELLING YOUR STORY



Why is it important?

- Lawmakers have lobbyists in their ear about facts and talking points about legislation. Your story adds how policy affects real people in their districts
- Your story particularly matters NOW in this "unusual time." Members of Congress need stories of impact from their district to use when they are pushing back; to use to persuade others in Congress to vote a certain way
- While Democrats are in the minority, constituent voices matter more than ever, whether you have a Republican or Dem representative.
- Your call also lets a lawmaker know that people are engaged and care about this issue

TELLING YOUR STORY

How to construct your story?

- There is a reason you are calling or emailing a lawmaker. Let them know the reason!
- Talk about why you are passionate about this issue and how it affects your life or your community
- Make it personal. Center yourself and your community in the story you are telling

A green-tinted photograph of a protest crowd. In the foreground, a woman on the left wears sunglasses and a white t-shirt with '15 DAYS FOR' visible. She has her fist raised. To her right, a man has his mouth open in a shout and his fist raised high. Other people in the background also have raised fists. A sign in the lower left corner says 'GOOD JOB'.

CALLING YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

CALLING YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

Step one - Write your script (include your personal story!) on what you want to say to the staff of a lawmaker

Step two - Look up who you want to call and find their number

- <https://www.congress.gov/members/find-your-member>

Step three - Practice (by yourself or with a friend!)

- The first time you do it, you may be nervous but practicing with a friend will be helpful on how you can to word your call

Step four - Make the call!

- Read directly from your script if you aren't comfortable. You'll most likely be talking to staffers that have been answering calls all day and will relay your message to your lawmaker

Step five - Repeat for other lawmakers

Step six - Ask your friends to do the same!

CALLING YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

Things to include in your script -

1. Your name
2. Where you are from
3. Why you are calling (your story)
4. An ask
5. Thank you

CALLING YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

What your call script could look like -

Hi my name is Dane Levis and I am a constituent from Richmond, VA. I'm calling to urge Senator Warner to protect EPA funding in the budget. The EPA is the first line of defense protecting Americans everywhere from dangerous pollution that causes cancer, asthma attacks, lung disease, and other health threats as well as climate change.

I have seen Richmond be affected by climate change through the heat waves and hotter temperatures we have to deal with as well as the flash flooding we see regularly.

Also, Richmond went through a terrible drought this past summer made worse by climate change. I have friends and family members living in

CALLING YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

Tips and things to remember:

- There is no quiz! You don't need to be a policy expert to voice your opinion
- You'll be talking to someone from their office and they will write down your message and relay it to the Member of Congress
- It won't take long at all (maybe two to three minutes)
- Congressional offices keep a tally of what constituents are calling about and they report it every night to the member
- The staff are not going to be combative or confrontational. They are going to listen what you have to say, record your message, and then relay it to their boss
- This is the most immediate way to engage with a Member of Congress

A green-tinted photograph of the White House, showing its iconic portico with columns and the American flag flying on a tall pole in front. The text "WRITING TO YOUR REPRESENTATIVE" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

WRITING TO YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

WRITING TO YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

Step one - Find your lawmakers office or email

- If you are writing a handwritten letter, you will have to mail it or deliver it to the lawmakers office

Step two - Write your letter

- Use the same components we talked about for calls (who you are, your story, an ask, and thank you)
- Use your own words - you can use talking points from organizations like LCV but you don't want your letter to read like a form letter

Step three - Deliver or mail your letter

- If you hand deliver it, go your lawmakers website and find your closest office location

Step four - Repeat for other issues and other lawmakers while you wait for a response

The image shows the United States Capitol building in Washington, D.C., with its iconic dome and neoclassical architecture. The entire image is covered with a semi-transparent green filter. Centered over the building is the text "ATTENDING A TOWN HALL MEETING WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVE" in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

ATTENDING A TOWN HALL MEETING WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

ATTENDING A TOWN HALL MEETING

Why is attending a town hall important?

- This is a great opportunity to get face to face time with your lawmaker and let your voice be heard
- You can speak directly to the lawmaker who will be voting on the issue you care about
- Often times, you can connect with individuals and groups that are working on the issues you care about
- You attending the town hall and asking a question lets your lawmaker know that their constituents are engaged on the issue you are asking about
- Press is usually there and can report on the question you bring up during the town hall

ATTENDING A TOWN HALL MEETING

Step one - Find if your lawmaker is hosting an in-person or virtual town hall near you

- You can check their website or social media page to find out

Step two - Draft the question you would like to ask the lawmaker

Step three - Attend the town hall and sign up to ask a question

- During your question, you can briefly talk about your story and why you are there attending the town hall

Step four - Follow up the town hall by calling or emailing the office the next day

A group of approximately ten diverse individuals are posed in front of a large mural. The mural features stylized portraits of people and the text 'FAIL POWER' at the top and 'TO T PEOPLE' at the bottom. The group includes a woman in a denim jacket and patterned skirt, a man in a cap and glasses, a man in a white t-shirt and jeans, a man in a black t-shirt and jeans, a woman in a black t-shirt, a man in a hat, a woman in a grey top, and a man in a black t-shirt. The text 'SOCIAL MEDIA' is overlaid in the center of the image.

SOCIAL MEDIA

ENGAGING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Why is it important to post on social media?

- Posting on social media builds awareness and momentum around advocacy and shows Members of Congress that their constituents care about a certain issue
- Social media can educate audiences unfamiliar with certain issues and include more voices in the conversation
- Staff from Members of Congress offices check their social media mentions and tags regularly

ENGAGING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Tips and tricks -

- **Tag your member of Congress** in your posts
 - Remember that staffers from these offices check their tags and mentions on social media platforms consistently
- Attach articles that back up the ask or story you are trying to relay to your representative
- **Share your story** - explain how policies/actions/inactions are directly impacting you/your family/your community
- Ask questions! Give them something to engage with
- Signal that you are a constituent of said Member by referencing your location in your content
- Call for Action - Ask your member directly to pass a bill or thank them for taking a certain action