



How to Have a Productive Phone Call With Your Legislator's Office

- **Think: do I need to make a call?** Timeliness is especially important when you are phoning. Phone calls are best for imminent votes or other timely political issues. Email works better for meeting requests and broader political issues.
- **Pick up the phone.** To find the contact information for your state or federal legislator, visit <http://www.usa.gov/Contact/Elected.shtml>.
- **Ask for an aide who handles the issue about which you are calling.** Your call will be more influential if you speak to the correct legislative aide, so ask to speak with the person in the office who handles the issue about which you are calling (e.g., health care, church-state). Some offices have few aides, or else their aides are extremely busy. If you cannot speak with the aide, leave a message with the receptionist stating your reason for calling and views on the issue.
- **Let them know that you are a constituent.** Elected officials are most interested in your opinions if you are a voter in the district or state he or she represents. Make clear that you are a constituent; even better, stress any of your local community activity (e.g., if you serve on a school board or PTA).
- **Know your facts.** Be sure you have the basic information about your topic in front of you when you call. You should be able to specifically describe the topic about which you are calling and state your opinion on what your legislator should do. Feel free to write it down in advance.
- **Note any expertise.** If you have professional or academic qualifications with the issue in question be sure to mention it. It will help to establish your credibility on the issue and may even prompt the aide to ask you for guidance on the issue.
- **Be brief.** Aides receive many phone calls every day, so keep your call short. Make your point and say thank you.