



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

(Amended, via Union of Concerned Scientists: <http://bit.ly/LZxagJ>)

- **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 the 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 aide who handles the issue about which you are calling (e.g., health care, church-state separation). However, 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. State the city and state you are from.
- **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 your 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 event prompt the aide to ask you for some guidance on the issue.
- **Be brief.** Aides receive many phone calls every day, so keep your call short.
- **Be timely.** Timeliness is especially important when you are phoning. If there is a relevant bill or imminent vote, the aide is more likely to pay attention to what you say.