

## Contacting Members of Congress

### By Phone:

Members of Congress can be contacted at their offices in Washington, D.C. or in the home state or district. You can reach a member's D.C. office by calling the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202)224-3121 and asking for your senators' and/or representative's office. The members' web site, which can be found through [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) or [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov), will usually list office numbers both in Washington, DC and in the home state or district.

When calling, ask to speak with the aide or staff member who handles the issue about which you wish to comment. After identifying yourself, tell the aide you would like to leave a brief message, such as: "Please tell Senator/Representative (Name) that I support/oppose (S.\_\_\_/H.R.\_\_\_)." You will also want to state reasons for your support or opposition to the bill. Ask for your senators' or representative's position on the bill.

### By Mail/Fax:

If you choose to contact your member of congress via mail, state your purpose for writing in the first paragraph of your letter. If your letter pertains to a specific piece of legislation, identify it accordingly, e.g., House bill: H. R. \_\_\_\_, Senate bill: S. \_\_\_\_\_. Be courteous, to the point, and include key information, using examples to support your position. Address only one issue in each letter; and, if possible, keep the letter to one page. Consider faxing the letter, as mail can sometimes take 4 to 6 weeks to reach a member's office.

Letters should be addressed to:

#### *To a Senator:*

The Honorable (full name)  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

#### *To a Representative:*

The Honorable (full name)  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator:

Dear Representative:

*Note: When writing to the Chair of a Committee or the Speaker of the House, it is proper to address them as:*

Dear Mr. Chairman or Madam Chairwoman:

Dear Madam Speaker or Mr. Speaker:

**By Email:**

Most members of congress list email contact information on their web sites. You should follow the same guidelines as listed above for contacting the member by mail.

**In Person:**

Meeting with a member of Congress or congressional staff is a very effective way to convey a message about a specific legislative issue. When attempting to meet with a member, contact the Appointment Secretary/Scheduler in his/her office to make an appointment; it is not recommended to arrive at a member's office without an appointment. Explain your purpose and who you represent. It is easier for congressional staff to arrange a meeting if they know what you wish to discuss and your relationship to the area or interests represented by the member, so be clear about what it is you want to achieve. If the member is unavailable, consider meeting with an appropriate staff member.

When it is time to meet with a member, be punctual and be patient. It is not uncommon for a member of Congress to be late, or to have a meeting interrupted, due to busy congressional schedules. Bring information and materials supporting your position to the meeting and attempt to share information and examples that demonstrate clearly the impact or benefits associated with a particular issue or piece of legislation.

Wherever possible, demonstrate the connection between what you are requesting and the interests of the member's constituency. Describe for the member how you or your group can be of assistance to him/her. Where it is appropriate, remember to ask for a commitment. Be prepared to answer questions or provide additional information, in the event the member expresses interest or asks questions.

Follow up after the meeting with a thank you letter that outlines the different points covered during the meeting, and send along any additional information and materials requested.