

# >Contact your members of Congress in 3 simple steps

## 1. Identify

There are 435 members in the House of Representatives, each elected to represent a state district. There are 100 senators (two from each state). This means you are represented by one representative and two senators.

To find your senators, go to [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) and select your state in the top right-hand corner. The names and contact information of your senators will be displayed.

To find your representative, go to [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov). The upper left-hand corner of the webpage allows you to plug in your ZIP code and identify your representative. The member's name should appear with a link to his/her webpage. You will be able to find the contact information on the individual webpage.

## 2. Prepare

Once you have identified your members of Congress, you are ready to communicate with them. You do not have to be an expert on an issue to voice your opinion. These people are elected to serve the needs of their constituency. You are their constituents and they need to hear how issues affect you, your company, and your industry. Be honest, factual, and genuine while pointing out the benefits or potential harm the proposed legislation would have on your district/state. Economic impact information should always be included when available.

## 3. Communicate

The legislative process can move very slowly or, at times, at lightning speed. Depending on the urgency of the issue, the type of communication you employ may vary. Many times, for example, a phone call is more appropriate than a letter.

### Phone calls

When an issue is being heard or decided by a committee or the full body of Congress within 24-48 hours, telephone calls may be the most efficient way to voice your opinion. You may phone the U.S. Capitol switchboard (202-224-3121) to be connected with the office of the senator or representative you want to reach. When placing a call, follow these general guidelines:

- > Identify yourself by stating your name, address, and reason for calling
- > Mention the legislation by name and bill number, and directly ask the senator or representative to support or oppose the bill
- > Keep your message brief and simple while giving specific reasons for your position

Be aware you will most likely be speaking to a junior staff person who is keeping a log of phone calls. They will not challenge your opinion or ask for details. Thank the person for his or her time and ask for a written response to your call. Don't forget to leave your mailing address.

### Written correspondence

Personally written constituent letters are one of the most effective ways to communicate your position on an issue. Taking the time to write a letter shows that you have a strong personal commitment to the issue. Form letters are easily recognized by congressional offices, and their value and impact are limited. So if you write letters, make them your own—even handwritten letters have a huge impact.

When writing a letter, try to keep it to one page. In the first few sentences, identify yourself and the specific issue (referencing a bill number if available) about which you are writing. Explain why you are writing and include 2-3 points supporting your position on the legislation. Be sure to state what you would like the elected

official to do. For example, “I urge Senator X to oppose S. XYZ” or “As a constituent, I am requesting that Congressman X support H.R. XYZ.” Include your full address and ask for a response to your letter.

### **The standard formula to use for addressing a letter to a member of Congress is:**

The Honorable (Full Name)  
United States Senate  
Room Number and Building (ex. 123 Russell Senate Office Building)  
Washington, D.C. 20510

VIA Fax: (202) XXX-XXXX

Dear Senator (Last Name):

**or**

The Honorable (Full Name):  
United States House of Representatives  
Room Number and Building (ex. 1234 Rayburn House Office Building)  
Washington, D.C. 20515

VIA Fax: (202) XXX-XXXX

Dear Representative (Last Name):

NEVER send your correspondence by regular U.S. mail. Due to increased security, processing can take up to three weeks for delivery. While email is certainly efficient, many times electronically transmitted letters get caught in a general mailbox and are not checked regularly. Faxing your letter to the Washington, D.C. office is currently the best delivery method. Be sure to indicate the letter was sent by fax, as shown in the examples above. You will find the fax number with the contact information when you go on the websites to locate your elected officials.

Finally, be sure to send a copy of your letter to your trade association representative, so appropriate follow-up action can be planned.

## **Key websites**

### **Executive**

The White House  
[www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)

### **Judiciary**

The Supreme Court  
[www.supremecourtus.gov](http://www.supremecourtus.gov)

### **Legislative**

U.S. House of Representatives  
[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)

Clerk of the House  
[clerk.house.gov](http://clerk.house.gov)

U.S. Senate  
[www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)

U.S. Senate Calendar of Business  
[www.gpoaccess.gov/calendars/senate](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/calendars/senate)

THOMAS  
[thomas.loc.gov](http://thomas.loc.gov)

Congressional Information  
[congress.org](http://congress.org)

Congressional Record  
[www.gpoaccess.gov/crecord](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/crecord)

### **Other Government Resources**

Federal Election Commission  
[www.fec.gov](http://www.fec.gov)

Federal Register  
[www.archives.gov/federal\\_register](http://www.archives.gov/federal_register)

Government Printing Office  
[www.gpoaccess.gov](http://www.gpoaccess.gov)

The Library of Congress  
[www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)

USA.gov  
[www.usa.gov](http://www.usa.gov)

U.S. Census Bureau  
[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

### **Political Parties**

Democratic National Committee  
[www.democrats.org](http://www.democrats.org)

Senate Democratic Conference  
[democrats.senate.gov](http://democrats.senate.gov)

Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee  
[www.dscc.org](http://www.dscc.org)

House Democratic Caucus  
[democrats.house.gov](http://democrats.house.gov)

Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee  
[www.dccc.org](http://www.dccc.org)

Republican National Committee  
[www.rnc.org](http://www.rnc.org)

Senate Republican Conference  
[src.senate.gov](http://src.senate.gov)

National Republican Senatorial Committee  
[www.nrsc.org](http://www.nrsc.org)

House Republican Conference  
[www.gop.gov](http://www.gop.gov)

National Republican Congressional Committee  
[www.nrcc.org](http://www.nrcc.org)

### **Media**

ABC News  
[abcnews.go.com](http://abcnews.go.com)

CBS News  
[www.cbsnews.com](http://www.cbsnews.com)

CNN  
[www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com)

C-SPAN  
[www.c-span.org](http://www.c-span.org)

FOX News Channel  
[foxnews.com](http://foxnews.com)

The Hill  
[www.hillnews.com](http://www.hillnews.com)

Los Angeles Times  
[www.latimes.com](http://www.latimes.com)

NBC News  
[www.msnbc.com](http://www.msnbc.com)

The New York Times  
[www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

Roll Call  
[www.rollcall.com](http://www.rollcall.com)

USA TODAY  
[www.usatoday.com](http://www.usatoday.com)

The Wall Street Journal  
[www.wsj.com](http://www.wsj.com)

The Washington Post  
[www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)

The Washington Times  
[www.washingtontimes.com](http://www.washingtontimes.com)