

# 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. Remember 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.

### Phone calls

Sometimes time is of the essence. 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. It is best to contact your senators or representative's office directly. The telephone numbers are listed on the individual websites. If you have trouble locating the direct number, you may also phone the U.S. Capitol switchboard (202-224-3121). Ask 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, ask if the senator or representative has a position on the legislation
- If the member's position aligns with yours, tell the person with whom you are speaking to thank the elected official for his or her support
- If the member does not yet have a position, directly ask that the member support your position
- 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 usually challenge your opinion or ask for details, but may ask why you support or oppose an issue.

### 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):

It is best not to send your letter by regular U.S. mail. Due to increased security, standard mail delivery may take more than a week. Faxing your letter to the Washington, D.C. office is a preferred 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.

Email delivery is also an option. Many Congressional offices have a feature on their websites that will allow a constituent to send a letter by email directly from the elected official's website. If, however, you know the name and direct email address of the staff person handling the issue, emailing the letter directly to him or her is always the best delivery method.

Finally, be sure to send a copy of your letter or email 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.dsc.org](http://www.dsc.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)

Politico  
[www.politico.com](http://www.politico.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)