

How to Speak on the Phone with Our Representatives



The most effective way to influence your representatives is with a phone call. Yes, it's easy to feel like your voice doesn't matter, especially when politicians listen mainly to corporate donors. But politicians—especially in Vermont—actually do listen to voters, especially constituents who call them on the phone.

Tragically, Republican voters are more vocal and persistent. (In recent years, Republican callers outnumber Democratic callers by up to 11 to 1 on key issues.) This imbalance has real consequences. Even though we are the majority of Americans, when Republicans inundate congressional offices with calls to oppose gun safety laws or to prohibit abortion, they affect national policy. Even “liberal” lawmakers may lean right when they perceive substantial opposition from their constituents.

Phone calls are more effective than emails or letters. To be sure, when you call Congress you will not speak with your actual representative; you will speak with a staff member. However, this still has an impact. Staffers meticulously log every call by topic and zip code, and submit daily reports to the representative on the top issues being called about. When politicians see a consistent surge in calls they understand these calls represent votes and that their jobs depend on responding to this pressure.

Before you dial, take a few moments to prepare what you're going to say.

- Focus on one issue per call (staffers have to log your call under a specific topic.)
- Emphasize that you are a constituent (elected officials don't care about calls from people outside their district).
- Keep your call brief (the more concise you are the easier it is for the staffer to convey your message to their boss).
- And always be polite, (a) because that's the Indivisible way, and (b) because staffers are overworked and underpaid and they certainly don't deserve to be dumped on just because you're pissed off at something Donald Trump said this morning.

Sample script

You: Hello, I am a constituent and I would like to make a comment to [elected official's name].

Staffer: Certainly. Please go ahead.

You: Thank you. My name is [full name], and I live in [town and zip code]. I'm calling to urge [elected official's name] to support/oppose [issue or impending bill]. I care about this because [reason].

Staffer: I will let [elected official's name] know your feelings on this issue. Would you like them to send a response to you?

You: [Yes or No]. Thank you very much for your time. I appreciate it.

Staffer: Thank you for your comments. Have a good day.

It's as quick and simple as that ... and it's also very effective.

Now go save our republic with a phone call!