

A Guide to Calling Your Legislators

A phone call is one of the best ways to share your views with your elected officials. At times, it can be even more effective than social media, email or snail mail. A phone call demonstrates that you are highly engaged and deeply committed to your cause. Below is how to prepare and what to expect.

PRIOR TO THE CALL

- [Look up the phone number for your senators and representative.](#)
- Before making the call, take a few minutes to gather your thoughts and prepare what you want to say. The call should take no longer than three minutes and will go by quickly.
- [Review the member profile for the legislator whose office you will speak with.](#)
- Expect to speak with a staff member, not your legislator, and be prepared to provide your name, hometown and, possibly, your zip code.

DURING THE CALL

- Be concise and make your points clearly. The call will go by fast and you should be able to share your key message up front. For example:
 - My name is [name] and I am a constituent living in [city].
 - I am calling today to talk about the next federal budget because [share specific reasons].
 - This is important to me because [explain why].
 - Can you share with me how [member name] feels about these issues and how the member plans to address them?
- Be polite in both tone and language. The person you are speaking to is most likely a staffer who is there to help record and track the needs of constituents.
- Explain why you are calling and what action you would like your legislator to take—for example, you would like them to support increased funding for federal financial aid programs.
- When possible, discuss the issue from a personal perspective, sharing your own experience or that of a family member or friend is especially powerful.
- Thank the staff member for taking the time to talk with you.
- Did you reach the office's voicemail? That's OK: leave a brief but detailed message stating why you're calling and urging a specific action. Offices check their voice messages and keep track of constituent concerns.

AFTER THE CALL

- Consider additional actions you can take on the issue: If you called the office and left a voicemail message, consider posting on social media and tagging your legislators and/or emailing them.
- If you haven't received a response, call back to restate your concerns and views.
- There is strength in numbers. Encourage family and friends to call their legislators, too!
- Have questions? Your [UC campus, lab and health center governmental relations offices](#) are an excellent resource.