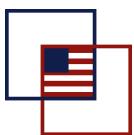


# **Calling Your Members of Congress**

**THE POLITICAL EMPATHY PROJECT  
QUICK START POLITICAL ACTION KIT**

[WWW.POLITICALEMPATHYPROJECT.ORG](http://WWW.POLITICALEMPATHYPROJECT.ORG)





## WHY CALL?

Calling your representatives is one of the most powerful ways to put pressure on your elected officials. It shows commitment to a cause, and legislators know that if they don't represent the concerns of their constituents, it could seriously impact their chances of getting reelected.

But we know that cold calling anyone can be a little intimidating, especially if you're someone susceptible to social anxiety. That's why we've put together this document to guide you through the process step-by-step.

## FIND YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

If you already know who your elected officials are, you can skip this step. If you don't, however, don't worry! Many people don't know who their senators or representatives are off the top of their head.

Luckily, it's incredibly easy to find out. Services like Call My Congress or 5 Calls can give you that information quickly—just enter your street address and zip code, and you'll have all of your legislators' contact information at your fingertips.

## FIGURE OUT HOW TO CONTACT THEM

If you feel comfortable calling legislators' offices directly, you absolutely should. But if you're unable to do that for any reason, you can dial the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 to ask to be connected to your senator or representative. The operator will direct your call straight to their DC Office, and you're good to go!

Usually, a legislative assistant will answer the phone and ask if you need a response. It's often better to say you don't, so they can tally you quicker without having to go through the extra step of adding you to a database.



## PREPARE NOTES OR A SCRIPT

If you're new to making calls, or nervous about saying the right thing, use a script. It's important to be clear about the reason you're calling, so you want to be as concise as possible. Often, organizations will provide their own script templates for specific advocacy campaigns—5 Calls is exceptionally good at providing free scripts for different issues—but you can also draft your own if you're uncomfortable using prefabricated content.

Here's an example of a quick call script, modeled after a script provided by a former Capitol Hill legislative assistant.

**"Hello, my name is [name]. I'm a constituent from [state], zip code [zip code]. I don't need a response. I'm calling to express my concern over [reason you're calling], and I strongly encourage [whoever you're calling] to [call to action]. I appreciate your hard work and time."**

## REMEMBER THESE TIPS

Only call your representatives! It can be tempting to call those directly involved in controversial initiatives or policies, but unless you can provide a zip code that proves you're a constituent, your call will be ignored entirely—and will create a backlog of calls coming from actual constituents in the district, making it less likely their voices are heard in a timely manner.

If you're the kind of person that needs an extra push to talk to a representative, you can also check out *Make Me Call*, a service that calls you every day to automatically connect you with one of your representatives' offices. Just make sure you have your script ready to go!

