

### **Why phone:**

- **Calling lets legislators know what you (and the public in general) are thinking**
- **May encourage legislators to take the action you want**
- **Reassures legislators if they agree with you and are getting negative feedback**
- **They are elected to serve us, so let them know what you want**
- **One call is worth 50 emails because you are taking the time.**

### **When to phone:**

- **When an issue is “ripe”, such as when a vote is imminent**
- **A letter takes considerable time to get through the inspection process and may take up to 2-3 weeks to be processed. When time is critical for an important decision/vote/event calling is immediate.**
- **When legislators’ aides will not have time to read all the emails before an imminent vote/action**
- **During their office hours (allow for time zone if calling D.C. – 2:00 Central is 3:00 Eastern)**

### **How to prepare:**

- **Find the name and number of the bill, and write it down. Every bill has a number**
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- **\* S.R. means it is a Senate Resolution – Call your Senator about this one**
  - **\* H.R. means it is a House Resolution – Call your Representative about this one**
    - **Every bill also has a name**
    - **Make sure you know what’s in the bill and understand what it’s supposed to do.**
- **Decide what you want the legislator to do (vote for/against the bill? co-sponsor?)**

- **Think about why you want the legislator to take the action you are requesting**
  - **How will it affect you, personally? (Or family, or a friend)**
  - **How will it affect your local community?**
  - **Write this down, either as notes or as 1 or 2 sentences – no more.**

#### **How to call and be heard:**

- **Call the D.C. or Austin office; keep trying if the line is busy**
- **First, identify yourself: “Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I live in \_\_\_\_\_. Could you get a message to \_\_\_\_\_?”**
- **At this point aides will say something like, “Of course. What is your zip code?” They may possibly even ask for a street address. This is to verify that you are a constituent. Give the information asked for. Then the aide will say something like, “What message did you want to give to \_\_\_\_\_?”**
- **Identify the issue first. “I’m calling about (name and number of the bill), and I think it is important because (give your reasons, referring to your notes if you need to).”**
- **“I would like for \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.”**
- **If you are told that \_\_\_\_\_ agrees with you, convey your thanks and support.**
- **If you are told that \_\_\_\_\_ does not agree with you, express your disappointment courteously.**
- **Don’t burn bridges; you may find them useful tomorrow.**