

PHONING POLICYMAKERS

Public officials expect to get calls from the public -- many have staff dedicated to the task. They rely on calls and letters to help them make the best decisions.

- Look up their office or home phone numbers. It is OK to call elected officials at their published home numbers – they are listed for a reason. (But don't call late at night.) Legislators' published home numbers and numbers at the Capitol are listed in the blue pages of your phone book.
- Prepare for the call. Write down the issue you are calling about and what you would like the official to do.
- Identify yourself – give your name, where you live and why you are calling.
- Ask if this is a good time to talk – if not, ask when would be a good time to call back.
- Be polite, courteous and respectful of their time.
- Always remember to ask for the action you want.
- Say your piece, then listen. Don't interrupt or argue.
- If they want more information, let them know that you will get it to them.
- If they have questions you cannot answer, say so. Then get the answer and call them back with it.
- Finish the call by thanking them for their time and their support (if they are supportive).
- You may speak to an aide or an answering machine – leave a message with the issue you are calling about, your name, number and the best times to reach you.
- Don't be discouraged if they haven't returned your call in a few days, just call back.

Sample Script for Calling a Policymaker

Hi. I am Susan Voter calling for Senator Jones. I live at 123 Morning Glory Circle in your district.

If you get the Senator - ask if this is a good time to talk. If not, when can you call back.

If you get the machine, leave a message:

I'm calling to urge your support for current proposals to expand access to health insurance for people in Connecticut. I think this is a critical issue. With the current economy, more and more people are losing health insurance. Not only is health coverage important for the health of the people affected, but it also saves money for all of us in the long run when everyone can get preventive care and early detection and treatment for problems.

Again, I urge your support. If you have any questions or comments, please call me back at 555-5555. Thank you for your time and for your public service.

