

Strategic Tactic Guide: Call to an Elected Official

Strategic Value: Elected officials and staffers log every call that comes into the office. They use these numbers to help determine how their constituents are feeling about a particular issue. Calls are strategic when we need to **quickly show opposition or support for an issue in huge numbers**.

Most likely, you will not be able to speak directly to your elected official (though this is more likely in smaller state or local offices). If it is a busy day, your call may go to voicemail, but no matter what, your opinion will be counted.

Logistics:

- Look up your elected official's office information online here. Record this information somewhere handy.
- If you are calling Congress, you can also use the Congressional switchboard here.
- Start with their D.C. office, then move on to local offices if you are not able to speak to anyone.
- Calling during business hours increases the likelihood that someone will answer.

How-to: Hit on these main points during your call.

1. Introduction

- Introduce yourself as a resident of the elected official's jurisdiction.
- There is power in organized groups. If applicable, introduce yourself as part of a group, like a local Working America committee.

2. Topic of Call

- Share why you're calling the representative's office, and briefly explain why you care about the issue.
- If you have a personal connection to the issue, succinctly tell your story.
- Feel free to use one of the talking points or statistics referenced on our issue guides.

3. Specific Ask

- Ask your elected official to take concrete action. You can ask them to vote for or against a specific bill, ask their colleagues to support or oppose a piece of legislation, or make a statement opposing an executive order.

4. Closing

- If you'd like, request a return call with information about the elected official's position on the issue or the result of how they voted (if applicable).
- Be sure to include your name and contact information if you ask for a response.

Example Call:

“Hi, this is Sam Williams. I live at 123 Main St. in Springfield and am a member of the Springfield Working America Committee. I am calling to urge Rep. Smith to vote against repealing the Affordable Care Act. I qualified for Medicaid under Medicaid Expansion, and this is the first time I have had access to quality health insurance. If the ACA is repealed, 30 million Americans will lose their health insurance, including me. I am asking Rep. Smith to stand up for folks like me and vote against repeal.

Please let me know which way Rep. Smith is planning to vote. My phone number is 773-883-0464. Thank you.

After the call: Organize!

Build on this call by organizing in your community to drive more calls into the office. Remember, phone calls are about generating quick action en masse.

- Post about your call on social media. Explain why you made the call, and your experience with the office. Invite your friends to make similar calls. Tag your elected officials.
- Reach out directly to like-minded folks with a clear, specific ask for them to make similar calls.
- Reach out to two people whom you have never talked politics with before. Explain why you made the call and why the issue is so important to you. Invite them to join your action.
- Activate your Rapid Response Team. This is a group of folks who are trained and on call to take actions quickly. Ask them to make similar calls.