



RURAL NEIGHBORHOODS

TIPS FOR CALLING YOUR LEGISLATOR

When the phone rings in the office of an elected official, a legislator is forced to notice! Members of Congress and other elected officials cannot do their job effectively if they do not hear the interests of people in their local community. If many calls come in regarding a specific issue the elected official may be persuaded to take action. Here are recommendations for making calls to your legislator.

If you need to find out the Members of Congress are in your area go to www.senate.gov and www.house.gov and enter your zip code to see who represents you. On these websites you will find links to your Members of Congress' websites where you can obtain contact information. You can also call Congress at (202) 224-3121 and ask to be connected with your Member's Congressional Office. That office can provide you with local contact information. Use www.congress.org to find your Governor and State Legislators. Don't be discouraged if you speak with a staff person. Most legislative aides relay the messages,

Prepare for the Call

Have an outline or notes of what you intend to discuss with the Member of Congress.

Identify Yourself

Identify yourself by giving your name and address.

Relax

Relax, have a normal conversation and do not read verbatim from a script.

Be Brief

Limit the call to one issue. State your position and make your point. Identify the legislation by name and number.

Ask for a View and a Vote

Find out the Member's view on the legislation and ask for a commitment to vote for or against the bill. Don't argue. Get the point across by being clear, direct and courteous.

Follow-Up

Send a thank you note to the Member of staff. Listening to the public's view may be their job but courtesy matters. It's also a great opportunity to restate your viewpoint in writing.

Then tell us about the call! Help Rural Neighborhoods obtain accurate information about your Member of Congress as possible by completing an **I Took Action Form** located on our website www.RuralNeighborhood.org at Tool for Advocates. .