

“How To” Guide on Effectively Contacting your Representative

Provided by Rubin Khoddam: We were contacted by someone who works on Capitol Hill and who graciously provided some useful suggestions for calling your elected officials (both House and Senate). They are great suggestions and we're really appreciative of this person taking the time to send us this list. Hope you all are able to put these suggestions to good use in the coming week!

1) Finding your senator: https://www.senate.gov/.../common/faq/How_to_correspond_senat...

2) Find your representative: <https://www.house.gov/representati.../find-your-representative>

3) Who should I contact?

- a. You have 2 senators and usually* (see below) one representative.
- b. As students at universities/colleges, you should take advantage of the fact that you matter to more than one representative if you live in a different district from your school. Look up your representative using your home zipcode and your school zipcode to see if they are different. Just be prepared to give either address depending on who you call.

4) Should I call the DC Office or the local office?

- a. Depends. If they're in recess (like this week), call their district or state offices. If they're in session, call the DC office. The House schedule is here: https://www.majorityleader.gov/.../.../2017_ANNUAL_CALENDAR.pdf/. The Senate schedule is here: https://www.senate.gov/legislative/2017_schedule.htm

5) Can I call everyone?

- a. You can, but the ones that care (and will actually listen) are your reps and senators.

6) What will happen when I call?

- a. You'll most likely speak to an entry-level staffer. They will usually be unable to give you a lot of information.
- b. What's most important is that they are able to log your position on the issue and get your name and address.
- c. The representative or senator is most interested in the number of callers on either side of the issue at the end of the day.

7) Senate Update

- a. The Senate bill current does NOT contain the language related to repealing the tax exemption of tuition waivers for graduate students.
- b. It is most important that you urge your Senator to NOT support the inclusion of this language in the final bill, to vote against a bill if it does contain this, and do everything possible to ensure the final conference bill does NOT contain this language.

8) House Update

- a. The House bill, passed out of the House on November 16, includes the language related to repealing the tax exemption of tuition waivers for graduate students.

b. The list of members who voted for and against the bill (H.R. 1) can be found here:

<http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2017/roll637.xml>

c. While this has already passed the House, any final conference language will have to pass BOTH the House and Senate.

d. If your member voted FOR H.R. 1:

i. Express your disappointment that the member voted for the legislation as it would hurt graduate students and urge the member to not vote for any final legislation that contains this language.

e. If your member voted AGAINST the legislation:

i. Thank the member for voting against the legislation and urge them to continue fighting against the inclusion of this language in any final conference legislation.

9) Does this have any impact?

a. YES! Congressional staffers notice when they are being inundated by calls, and Congressional members care if they feel the pressure.

b. The most pressure can be applied when MANY calls happen close together.

c. Be respectful, but make sure your information is taken down.