



How to Contact Your Legislator

Thank you for taking time to contact your legislator. You are the U's most powerful ally as we work to keep higher education a priority. Here are some effective techniques to help make your efforts a success.

- Always identify yourself as a constituent, when appropriate.
- Be genuine. Never give legislators a reason to doubt your honesty.
- Keep your messages simple and personal.
- Give clear and thoughtful reasons to back up your views. Everyone has an opinion, but a good story combined with strong facts will boost your credibility.
- Establish a common connection with your legislator, if possible.
- Let your legislator know if you are an expert on the issue. Some of the most valuable guidance legislators receive comes from well-informed and trustworthy constituents.
- Once you know a legislator supports your position, say thanks and move on to other issues.
- Be polite to everyone you contact. Threats are not effective.

Letters and E-mails

Legislators receive hundreds of letters and e-mails every day. A personal letter is more likely to draw a response than e-mail, but both are valid ways to contact your legislator.

- Keep written communication short and to the point.
- The subject line should reflect your main point and should be personalized.
- Identify yourself as a constituent.
- Describe your relationship with the U.
- Clearly state what action you want your legislator to take.
- Express your appreciation for their service.
- Ask for a specific response, if you want one.
- Sign your letter with your full name, address, and if you wish, phone number.

If you receive an Action Alert from the Legislative Network, be sure to personalize your e-mail. Your e-mail is more likely to be read and to have an effect if you include your own story.

Phone Calls

Calling your legislators at their office is a great way to show you are interested and informed about an issue. It also lets legislators know that their actions are being followed.

- Before you call, plan the key points you want to make.
- If you do not connect with your legislator when you call, be sure to leave a message.
- Always identify yourself as a constituent.
- Always say thanks.