



Tips on Phoning, Writing or E-mailing Legislator

Before contacting your Representative or Senator, become familiar with the issue you wish to comment on and how Congress operates. Information on issues ASHRAE is tracking, sample language, and primers on how Congress operates are available from the Government Affairs Resources (<http://www.ashrae.org/advocacy/page/1262>) page.

Tips on Telephoning Your Representatives:

To find your representative's phone number, you may search on the House of Representatives or Senate websites (<http://www.house.gov> and <http://www.senate.gov> respectively) or call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask for your Senator's and/or Representative's office.

Telephone calls often are taken by a staff member, not the member of Congress. Ask to speak with the aide who handles the issue to which you wish to comment (e.g., energy, environment, taxes).

After identifying yourself (particularly that you live/work in the member's district), tell the aide you would like to leave a brief message, such as: "Please tell Senator/Representative (Name) that I support/oppose (S. ___/H.R. ___)." You will also want to state reasons for your support or opposition to the bill. Ask for your Senator's or Representative's position on the bill.

You may also request a written response to your telephone call.

Tips on Writing Congress

The letter is the most popular choice of communication with a congressional office. If you decide to write a letter, this list of helpful suggestions will improve the effectiveness of the letter:

1. Your purpose for writing should be stated in the first paragraph of the letter. If your letter pertains to a specific piece of legislation, identify it accordingly, e.g., House bill: H. R. ____, Senate bill: S. ____.
2. Be courteous, to the point, and include key information, using examples to support your position.
3. Address only one issue in each letter; and, if possible, keep the letter to one page.

Addressing Correspondence:

To a Senator:

The Honorable (full name)
__(Rm.#)__(name of)Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

To a Representative:

The Honorable (full name)
__(Rm.#)__(name of)House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

Note: When writing to the Chair of a Committee or the Speaker of the House, it is proper to address them as: Dear Mr. Chairman or Madam Chairwoman: or Dear Madame Speaker.

Tips on E-mailing Congress

Most, but not all, Members of Congress have accepted e-mail as a communication tool. It is quickly becoming the preferred way for constituents to communicate with their representatives in Congress.

The offices receive thousands of email on a daily basis, and it is very important to send your email in such a way that it doesn't get lost in the masses. Use the same guidelines for writing an effective letter. You may find and e-mail your representatives directly from their Congressional webpages which can be accessed from <http://www.house.gov> and <http://www.senate.gov>.