

How Do I Call My Congressperson and What Do I Say?!

I don't know who my Congressperson is?

Go to www.house.gov, enter your zip code in the upper left corner, and click on your Congressperson's name. You will be directed to his/her website where you will find the contact information for their Washington DC and district offices.

(Go to www.senate.gov to find contact information for your U.S. Senator.)

OR

If you know the name of your Congressperson but need their contact info...

Follow the above instructions or call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121 and ask to be connected to your Congressperson's office.

What do I say??

A receptionist will answer the phone. You can either leave your message with this person or ask to be connected to the staffer working on the bill of interest. Your "ask" can be this simple:

"I am a constituent of Representative [Name] and a physician. I am asking him/her to support [Bill Number, e.g., H.R. 100].

OR

"I am a constituent of Senator [Name] and a physician. I am asking him/her to support [Bill Number, e.g., S. 100].

(Of course, you may be asking for just the opposite, i.e., that your Member of Congress defeat a bill of interest.)

If you would like to **embellish your "ask"** or are asked for more information regarding your concerns, the following might be things to consider for your response:

1. Add whatever personal facts you think might be pertinent to your "ask"—your city of residence, your medical specialty, whether or not you voted for your Member of Congress, etc.
2. Discuss what you like/don't like about this bill.
3. Explain why this bill is so important to you;
 - a. How the policy would improve/inhibit your ability to practice medicine; your livelihood
 - b. How the policy would improve/inhibit the lives of your patients; their ability to access treatment
 - c. How the policy might have positive/negative externalities outside of addiction treatment; what other ramifications of this bill might be
4. Offer ways that you can be of service to this office--provide research or other educative materials; support grassroots efforts related to this matter in your home district; be available for questions, testimony, etc.
5. Ask for an email so you can follow up with a thank you and later communications.
6. Thank your Congressperson for his/her attention to this matter!!

I made the call, now what do I do?

Follow up is critical! Call or email within the next week to ask about the status of this bill and of your Congressperson's support. Remember to thank the Congressperson for his/her support and to offer assistance where you can.

And that's it! Thank you for helping ASAM advocate for this important matter.