

Involvement Handbook



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Here's how you can take effective action to let your elected representatives know how you want them to vote on important issues, as well as ways to spread the message to others so that they may take action too. Through education and holding our representatives accountable for their votes, one voice evolves into the voice of many speaking in unity... This One Voice can not help but be heard.

Getting Involved Productively

1. Study the issues: Know what you're talking about. Do your research. Don't take the media's word as whether a particular bill is beneficial or destructive for our country--read the actual bill line by line -on-line. Check the voting records of your representative on key issues so you won't be fooled by political rhetoric and promises: their actual votes are often quite opposite! Then hold them accountable with your vote or they will continue voting against your wishes--and against their own rhetoric. Be sure to thank your representatives when they vote correctly.

The Library of Congress' Thomas (<http://thomas.loc.gov>) has all recorded votes and copies of bills.

2. Know how Congress works: Learn their rules so you can better understand--and thereby be better equipped to influence--the legislative process. Know what is happening, for example when a bill is referred to a committee or how the differences between a House and a Senate version of a bill are resolved. The rules the House and Senate follow are full of many opportunities to defeat, bury, or alter a bill; and to sneak through without notice dangerous bills and treaties! Only by knowing the rules can you predict and avoid these traps and tricks.

Read two publications which explain the legislative process from the introduction of a bill to the President's signature:

How Our Laws Are Made is a publication of the House of Representatives and explains House rules. It is available on our web site - www.ThisOneVoice.com

Enactment Of A Law is published by the Senate and explains the Senate rules. This is also available on our web site - www.ThisOneVoice.com

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3. Write a letter, send E-mail or call your elected representatives:

Note, letters to Congress and the White House will be delayed by many weeks or months due to security procedures. For fast communications, call, fax or email.

To call your Senators or Congressman, you can call 202-224-3121, and ask to be connected to their offices. (You can also call the White House at 202-456-1111.) When you call, you can leave your opinion with the receptionist, who will relay it to the member; but better yet, ask to speak to the Legislative Assistant (or "L.A." in Capitol slang) who deals with your issue. The L.A. is the person who studies particular issues and makes recommendations directly to the Congressman, therefore a brief conversation with the L.A. is often more effective.

Your local government addresses, phone numbers, and representative's E-Mail addresses are listed on our site - www.ThisOneVoice.com.

4. Visit your elected representatives. This is one of the most effective things you can do. You may visit either individually or (even better) as a group. Representatives will often meet citizens at their local offices, so call and set up an appointment. This allows you to have their full attention for your issue, unfiltered by their staff who sometimes may not share the same political views as the representative does.

5. Attend town meetings arranged by your elected representatives or civic groups, as well as candidate debates. Here is your opportunity to ask questions in front of the media and other citizens. This is an excellent way to hold your representatives accountable for their votes and to put them on the spot if they do not want to take a stand or if they do not want their voting records known. You can also hand out information about your issue to the people attending such meetings so more will learn about it.

6. Call radio talk shows. Talk shows are perhaps the best way you can bypass media bias, and you will have the opportunity to educate or rally to action thousands or even millions of people with one phone call. Call the local talk shows in your area. You can also fax or e-mail comments and articles to talk shows to alert the hosts about issues so they can warn their listeners; and many hosts will read e-mail comments on the air - saving you the struggle of getting through on the phone.

7. Write letters to the editors of newspapers. Many now accept letters by E-mail. Go to our newspaper E-Mail links. Your letter can reach thousands or millions of readers to influence public opinion, expose or praise Congressional voting records, alert the public on key issues, correct media bias or lack of proper reporting, and more.

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When writing letters to the editor or calling talk shows, keep your message brief (letters should be 200 words or shorter), easily understandable to someone who is not familiar with the issue (avoid jargon and specialized terminology as many readers won't understand such terms), and stay focused on the subject. You can ask readers to take action such as contacting their representatives.



8. Make a petition requesting your representatives take action on your issue. You can request petitions from any number of groups. See our impeachment petition as an example. Sign your name and ask friends, relatives, and co-workers to sign too. To create the biggest impact, circulate the petition around your community to gather large numbers of signatures. Some very effective locations at which to collect signatures are near the entrances of shopping centers and grocery stores (with their permission), at subway stations, airports, and busy street corners.

Mail the petitions to your representatives--or to maximize impact, visit your representatives local office, either giving them to the staff or arrange to meet the representative in person. Inform the media that you delivered the petitions either by writing a news release and faxing it to all media in your area or by calling news editors directly.

5. Build support on the Internet: E-mail your friends and fellow conservatives or post messages promoting your issue suggesting that people take these same actions. You can post messages to newsgroups, start a web page, or visit other web sites and e-mail them to alert them to your issue.

6. Build a coalition by talking to groups, churches, business and civic groups, home schoolers, and companies to gain their support for your issue. Ask these groups to pass resolutions or to write a letter supporting your issue. Ask them to send copies of their resolution or letter to the local media as well.

7. Educate the public through television at no cost: Use public access cable television channels to broadcast issue related shows. Here's a guide to start your own cable TV show.

8. Help more people get involved. Encourage people to visit our web site (www.ThisOneVoice.com) and take advantage of our information, and tools.

9. Contribute to This One Voice on our secure credit card system to assist in helping others become involved also. That is our only purpose, and your tax deductible donation will go a long way.

Thank You... for caring enough to get involved!