

# Contacting Your Representative

- ❖ **Target the right person.** When it comes to making your voice heard in the government, it might seem like the best thing you can do is flood every senator or congressional representative's office with multiple messages. However, this just makes it harder for you to be taken seriously and start an actual dialogue. Check [FaxZero.com/fax\\_congress.php](http://FaxZero.com/fax_congress.php) to find out who *your* representatives are and where to fax them. They're the ones who can help you!
- ❖ **Identify yourself.** Since representatives get a lot of out-of-state callers and faxes, they're more likely to ignore people who aren't their actual constituents. Make sure you provide your county, city and state. Ideally, include your full contact information so that it's clear that you're who you say you are and that you'd like a response or the chance to open up a dialogue.
- ❖ **Be specific.** Focus on one issue at a time, even if you're passionate about a lot of things. Tell your representative exactly what it is you want them to do (vote a certain way on a specific bill, make a statement about an issue, etc.). Or just give them encouragement if you think they're doing the right thing! Check that they're actually in a position to implement the changes you want before you fax.
- ❖ **Be respectful.** Even if you're mad, you're going to get further if you adopt a polite tone.
- ❖ **Be personal.** Form emails and faxes only go so far. They might be rounded up with others on the same issue and get stuck together. But a story about how the issue or bill affects you personally is going to carry more weight. It has more of a chance of getting through a staffer and to the actual representative. It might even be used to illustrate a point when the issue is being discussed between parties. If you call, your individual voice will sell your point better than a script.
- ❖ **Be brief.** You shouldn't need more than a couple of paragraphs, and definitely no more than a page. While you might have a lot to say, a shorter fax is more likely to get read all the way through.
- ❖ **Just do it once.** Representatives are open to their constituents' opinions and needs, so don't clog up their lines just to make waves. Call, email or fax once per issue and you'll have taken a great step in fulfilling your civic responsibilities.
- ❖ **Choose the best method for you.** While a fax ensures a physical copy and a staffer to look at it, these rules also apply to email and phone. Call or write and ensure your voice is heard!