

## How to Contact your State Legislators

### Identify your State Legislators

- Find your state legislature website using this Library of Congress tool: <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/state-legislatures.html>. Then use the search function provided by your state legislature website to identify your representatives.
- If your state legislature website does not have a search function, you can enter your address at Project Vote Smart (<http://votesmart.org/>) to find your elected officials. Once you enter your address, click the plus (+) sign next to “State Legislative” to see your state Senator and Representative.

### Make the Call

When you call, 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/oppose [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/oppose [Bill Number, e.g., S. 100].

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!!

#### Follow-up

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.

Thank you for being an advocate!!