

TIPS WHEN MAKING **PHONE CALLS TO POLICYMAKERS**

Telephone calls are fast, easy, and highly personalized ways to express your concerns. Phone campaigns can also be highly effective, and given the speed with which things move in politics, phone calls might be the best option.

Many policymakers at the federal level will tell you that 10 phone calls is background noise, 30 calls are enough to raise awareness, but 100 phone calls by constituents is an emergency. (At the state & local level, as few as 5 calls can make a difference.)

Here are some **TIPS FOR MAKING PHONE CALLS TO POLICYMAKERS:**

- Call policymakers (your congressional member) at their office
- Identify yourself and where you are from (group name, town, etc.)
- Ask to speak with the policymakers or their aide handling the issue of concern. (If neither is available, leave a message with your name, your group's name & your phone number)
 - Be prepared to give a brief statement if the policymaker answers or if you leave a message
- Keep your comments brief
- Be sure to make specific requests (like, “please vote for SF-1217 – a bill to do _____. It will help people with disabilities to _____ better.”)
- Have your argument well researched and be ready to send background information to the office.
- When generating many calls to a policymaker, ask your callers to leave a message with the receptionist. Overloading an aide with too many calls will be problematic when trying to build a positive relationship with the staff. Have a few callers contact the aide to let them know that there is an issue.

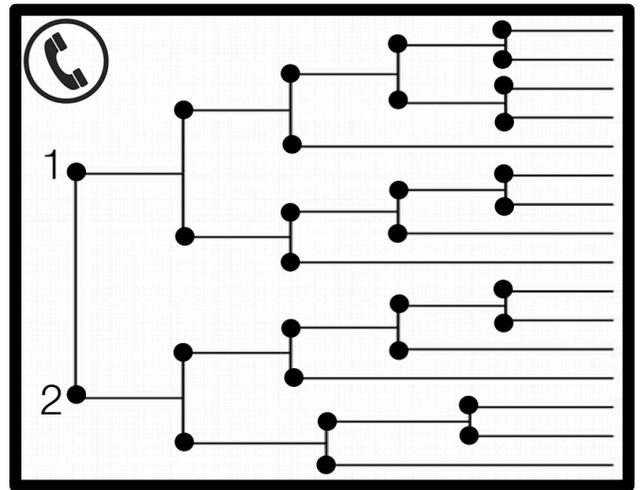


Here are some **TIPS FOR ORGANIZING AN EFFECTIVE PHONE-TREE:**

- Choose a main coordinator to maintain and activate the phone tree. This person will pass along the job to several key people, who will continue to pass it along.

(Two graphics are not available in Braille: The first is an old vintage 1930's style phone with an elongated neck, painted gold and black. The second graphic depicts a typical “phone tree” set up. The coordinator calls the first 2 people, who each call two people, that layer then calls two people – in 5 rounds of calls, 35 people can quickly & cheaply be notified using an effective phone tree.)

- **Make a list of members & current phone numbers for a phone tree**
- **Select a few key people to be responsible for calling up to ten people**
- **Give these key people names and numbers to be called**
- **Be sure to pass along a short and concise message. Since the message will go through the tree, it needs to be clear enough for everyone to write down and repeat it to every policymaker.**



Keep your phone tree current and working. After the phone tree has been activated, the last persons on the tree should call the coordinator to verify that the messages have made it through the network.