

# HOW TO CALL YOUR LEGISLATOR

This is an effective way to make your voice heard. It's easy and doesn't take much time.

## Why do it?

Many legislators hear from corporate lobbyists and their party leadership more than they hear from voters in their districts. Making regular phone calls (every two weeks) to share your concerns about how Harrisburg is supporting (or not supporting) public education allows you to share with lawmakers the local impact their decisions are having on your children's public schools and your community.

The vast majority of Pennsylvanians, regardless of party, support quality public schools. There is support for strong public education among political representatives and leaders of both parties as well. Calling your lawmakers is a way to show them that voters in their home districts are watching them and will hold them accountable for their votes on issues related to our public schools.

## Tips for a good call

- Put your lawmakers' phone numbers in your cell phone so you can call them anytime.
- When you call, introduce yourself and identify yourself as a constituent--share your address.
- State your topic and say WHAT you care about, SUPPORT or OPPOSE, and WHY.
- Give an example of your personal experience when possible.
- ASK for a FOLLOW UP RESPONSE

## A sample call

Hi this is Susan Pennsylvanian, I am a constituent of Representative Handshaker. My address is 123 Laurel Street in Everytown. I am calling because I strongly support public education and I am very concerned about the impact that inadequate state funding is having on our local schools and on our community.

My 2nd grader's class went from 22 to 28 kids this year and the school board raised property taxes. Students are getting less individual attention and local taxpayers are paying more. I am calling to ask Representative Handshaker to go to Harrisburg to fight for more state education funding for the children and taxpayers he represents.

## A Few Tips:

- **Be pleasant to the staff.**

They take a lot of calls, often from people who are upset about things (and some from people who just like to complain). We suggest thinking of it as a conversation you might have at work or a meeting: keep the tone professional and courteous, make your point about the issue.

- **Try to sound like yourself.**

It is okay to prepare notes to remind yourself what you are calling to say, but try not to read something. Share your sincere personal opinion and your reasons for it, in your own words.

- **Keep it short.**

A 2-3 minute call is usually plenty to say WHAT you SUPPORT (or oppose), WHY, and to give your contact information and ask for a response.

- **Don't expect to speak to your representative.**

The staff is supposed to take your calls. At some point you may want to consider asking for a personal meeting, but that doesn't always happen right away. Meanwhile, working with staff can be a good way to start making contact with the office and put your issues on their radar.

