



[www.YouthPROMISEAction.org](http://www.YouthPROMISEAction.org)  
Sponsored by The Peace Alliance &  
Student Peace Alliance

## Keys to Lobbying Congress

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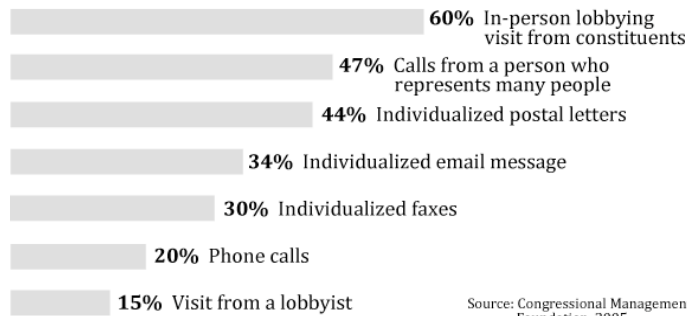
**1. Write**  
an email or letter

**2. Call**  
locally & in D.C.

**3. Meet**  
in their offices

### Letters, Calls & Visits to Congress Matter

Percentage of Congressional staff who say the following advocacy techniques have a significant influence on a legislator who is undecided on an issue:



Source: Congressional Management Foundation, 2005

### Making a Persuasive Case

- 1. Speak with genuine passion** to inspire your audience.
- 2. Know your Member & staff** and how the issue affects them, their constituents and their district and state.
- 3. Know your topic**, and be prepared with briefing materials on hand.
- 4. Have a clear objective** and get your message across right away with succinct, memorable phrases.
- 5. Explain what's at stake in specific terms**, using convincing facts, figures and personal anecdotes to support your position and put a human face on the issue.
- 6. Keep the big picture in mind**, and be able to place your issue in the broader context of what's happening on the topic and what the alternatives are.
- 7. Empower your audience**, giving them an opportunity to commit to take a specific action that advances your goal

### Key Contact Information

**FIND your Members of Congress:**

[www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org)

**CALL your Members of Congress:**

Capitol Switchboard:  
(202) 224-3121

**READ Bills & IDENTIFY Cosponsors:**

[www.thomas.gov](http://www.thomas.gov)

### What Works?

- 1. Individualize Your Message**  
*One personalized message carries more weight than 10 form letters, mass emails or pre-printed postcards.*
- 2. Be Polite & Appreciative**  
*Make a request, not a demand. Staffers tend to dismiss angry constituents. And thank a member who has supported your issue in the past.*
- 3. Make a Specific Request, Focus on One Issue, & For the Love of Aunt Sally Be Brief**  
*"I'm a constituent concerned about the devastating youth violence in our community and the massive costs of juvenile incarceration, and I'd like Rep. Dosomething to cosponsor H.R. 1064, the Youth PROMISE Act.*
- 4. Contact Only Your Own Members of Congress**  
*Most offices dismiss messages from non-constituents, so be sure to include your complete mailing address.*
- 5. Be Timely and Add a Local Angle**  
*Focus on an upcoming hearing, vote or recent news event, and share how this issue impacts your community or state.*
- 6. Magnify Your Impact: Encourage Other Constituents to Act, Especially Community Leaders**  
*Every action counts, but you'll increase your chances of getting attention by organizing a letter writing campaign on a single issue, especially if you include a local leader such as a clergy member, elected or government official or businessperson as a voice in the campaign.*