

Organizing a Call-In Day

Organizing a call-in day can be a very effective way to get the attention of your policymakers and offer an opportunity for peers to easily take action. All offices of elected officials take record of constituent calls and the issues raised. Coordinating a groundswell of people to call in on a specific day will help to make sure your congressional representatives recognize your issue and remind them they will be held accountable for their vote.

Here are the four steps for easily organizing a call-in day:

- 1. Create materials about your issue.** You'll need a call-in script for people to follow, so that they have the facts right there in front of them. An effective script shouldn't be more than a few sentences. Core elements include the following:
 - Tell your representative that you're a constituent—and share any affiliations with local institutions.
 - Make a very concrete ask (e.g. "Vote no.").
 - In a sentence or two, tell your representative why you care and what the implications are for his/her state and constituency.
 - Thank them for their time.

An example of one of Union of Concerned Scientists' call scripts can be found at www.ucsusa.org/CRAAlert. In addition to the script and easy-to-follow instructions for people to call*, you may also want to prepare a one-page fact sheet for callers to easily educate themselves on the issue and why they should care. Search or browse www.ucsusa.org for useful materials. If you hit a dead end, email ScienceNetwork@ucsusa.org for help.

- 2. Come up with an outreach strategy.** Take stock of all of the people and networks that may be interested in this issue, as well

as any avenues where you could publicize your call-in day. To guide your planning, ask yourself the following:

- Are there relevant active email lists or Facebook groups where you could send out your call-in day information?
- If you're at a campus or part of a community that may be interested, could you set up a table to distribute scripts and connect with the public?
- Are there other local organization chapters or school groups that you could partner with to promote the call-in day?
- Are there relevant blogs, Facebook groups, or local hashtags on Twitter you can use to spread the word?

- 4. Promote and publicize.** Once you have a record of all the potential people and avenues to reach out to, create a brief—just a few sentences—pitch as to why and how people can join the call-in day. If you want to track activity, you can create a collaborative document (e.g. Google Doc) or email address for people to easily let you know if they called. Many hands make for lighter work—invite some friends or colleagues who would help you do this outreach.

- 3. Follow up.** A few days after the call-in day, reach out to your elected officials to offer yourself as a resource. Offer more information on the issue and ask if there is anything you can do to help them as they consider the issue. Also, loop back around with any venues or people who participated in the call to share how the activity went and give thanks for their involvement.

*For more details on how to find contact information for your congressional representatives and tips for successful calls, go to www.ucsusa.org/action/phone-calls.html and www.ucsusa.org/callyoursenators.