# Opportunity 4 Mass Calls

# Mass office calling is a light lift, but it can actually have an impact. Tea Partiers regularly flooded congressional offices with calls at opportune moments, and MoCs noticed.

1. **Find the phone numbers for your MoCs.** Again, you can find your local MoCs and their office phone numbers at [www.callmycongress.com](http://www.callmycongress.com/).
2. **Prepare a single question per call.** For in-person events, you want to prepare a host of questions, but for calls, you want to keep it simple. You and your group should all agree to call in on one specific issue that day. The question should be about a live issue — e.g. a vote that is coming up, a chance to take a stand, or some other time-sensitive opportunity. The next day or week, pick another issue, and call again on that.
3. **Find out who you’re talking to.** In general, the staffer who answers the phone will be an intern, a staff assistant, or some other very junior staffer in the MoCs office. But you want to talk to the legislative staffer who covers the issue you’re calling about. There are two ways to go about doing this:
   * Ask to speak to the staffer who handles the issue (immigration, health care etc). Junior staff are usually directed to not tell you who this is, and instead just take down your comment instead.
   * On a different day, call and ask whoever answers the phone, “Hi, can you confirm the name of the staffer who covers [immigration/health care/etc]?” Staff will generally tell you the name. Say “thanks!” and hang up. Ask for the staffer by name when you call back next time.
4. **If you’re directed to voicemail, follow up with email.** Then follow up again. Getting more senior legislative staff on the phone is tough. The junior staffer will probably just tell you “I checked, and she’s not at her desk right now, but would you like to leave a voicemail?” Go ahead and leave a voicemail, but don’t expect a call back. Instead, after you leave that voicemail, follow up with an email to the staffer. If they still don’t respond, follow up again. If they still don’t respond, let the world know that the MoC’s office is dodging you.

Congressional emails are standardized, so even if the MoC’s office won’t divulge that information, you can probably guess it if you have the staffer’s first and last name.

* + **Senate email addresses:** For the Senate, the formula is: StafferFirstName\_StafferLastName@MoCLastName.senate.gov. For example, if Jane Doe works for Senator Roberts, her email address is likely “Jane\_Doe@roberts.senate.gov”
  + **House email addresses:** For the House, the formula is simpler: StafferFirstName.StafferLastName@mail.house.gov. For example, if Jane Doe works in the House, her email address is likely “Jane.Doe@mail.house.gov”

1. **Keep a record of the conversation.** Take detailed notes on everything the staffer tells you. Direct quotes are great, and anything they tell you is public information that can be shared widely. Compare notes with the rest of your group, and identify any conflicts in what they’re telling constituents.
2. **Report back to media and your group.** Report back to both your media contacts and your group what the staffer said when you called.

Sample Call Dialogue

**Staffer:** Congresswoman Sara’s office, how can I help you?

**Caller:** Hi there, I’m a constituent of Congresswoman Sara’s. Can I please speak with the staffer who handles presidential appointments issues?

**Staffer:** I’m happy to take down any comments you may have. Can I ask for your name and address to verify you’re in the Congresswoman’s district?

**Caller:** Sure thing. [Gives name/address]. Can I ask who I’m speaking with?

**Staffer:** Yes, this is Jeremy Smith.

**Caller:** Thanks, Jeremy! I’m calling to ask what the Congresswoman is doing about the appointment of Steve Bannon to serve in the White House. Bannon is reported as saying he didn’t want his children to go to a school with Jews. And he ran a website that promoted white nationalist views. I’m honestly scared that a known racist and anti-Semite will be working feet from the Oval Office. Can you tell me what Congresswoman Sara is going to do about it?

**Staffer:** Well I really appreciate you calling and sharing your thoughts! I of course can’t speak for the Congresswoman because I’m just a Staff Assistant, but I can tell you that I’ll pass your concerns on to her.

**Caller:** I appreciate that Jeremy, but I don’t want you to just pass my concerns on. I would like to know what the Congresswoman is doing to stop this.

*[If they stick with the “I’m just a staffer” line, ask them when a more senior staffer will get back to you with an answer to your question.]*

**Staffer:** I’m afraid we don’t take positions on personnel appointments.

**Caller:** Why not?

**Staffer:** Personnel appointments are the President’s responsibility. We have no control over them.

Caller: But Congresswoman Sara has the ability to speak out and say that this is unacceptable. Other members of Congress have done so. Why isn’t Congresswoman Sara doing that?

**Staffer:** As I said, this is the President’s responsibility. It’s not our business to have a position on who he chooses for his staff.

**Caller:** It is everyone’s business if a man who promoted white supremacy is serving as an advisor to the President. The Congresswoman is my elected representative, and I expect her to speak out on this.

**Staffer:** I’ll pass that on.

**Caller:** I find it unacceptable that the Congresswoman refuses to take a position. I’ll be notifying my friends, family, and local newspaper that our Congresswoman doesn’t think it’s her job to represent us or actually respond to her constituents’ concerns.