

Calls to Action

WHAT TO DO? WHAT TO DO?

Ready to get involved? Start with these three "Calls to Action." All of the information we refer to below, well-sourced and curated, can be found at www.madisonnjdemocrats.com.

CALL TO ACTION 1: READ THE BASICS

- "*Indivisible*," which was written by former Congressional staffers, has become the inspiration for the progressive movement
- "*Autocracy: Rules for Survival*" by Masha Gessen published in the NY Review of Books may also be of interest

CALL TO ACTION 2: GET READY TO BE HEARD

Put your representatives' numbers and e-mail addresses in the contacts of your phone; follow them on Twitter and Facebook. Here's how to make an impact, in decreasing order:

Office Visit: you are the face and story to a piece of legislation

1. Make an office appointment in order to talk to a higher level staffer
2. Bring a letter to leave behind for your elected official
3. Bring an advocate to provide the details and to answer technical questions

Phone Call: Make it short and sweet, about 1 minute

1. What? State the issue that matters
2. So What? Explain why concisely
3. Now What? What action do you want them to take?
4. Remember to always include your name and ZIP code.

Example: "My name is [] from [ZIP] and I'm concerned about Congress repealing the Affordable Care Act. I have relatives who will lose their health insurance and have pre-existing conditions. Will Senator/Rep _____ oppose any repeal of the ACA?"

Fax, E-Mail, Tweet: Tweeting gets the attention of the media, the public and other elected officials.

Here are some INSIDER TIPS from a former Senate Staffer

- Calls are considered better than e-mails, which are considered better than postcards (decreasing levels of personal effort invested)...but they are all absolutely better than not engaging at all. E-mail is open 24/7. After office hours, you can still leave a message if the machine isn't full.
- These contacts literally get counted, so your representative learns what issues are most important to constituents each week. The staff certainly notices when the waiting room is full, or when the switchboard is lighting up. Counts are usually separated by call, e-mail, letters/faxes, and office visits, and get reported that way.
- Repeating a vehicle (e.g. a call) with the same message is not recommended. It is considerably more helpful to have unique constituents calling about a given message.

CALL TO ACTION 3: ASK FOR A CURATED ACTION LIST

There are apps that will notify you of upcoming votes and news (e.g. *Countable*, *Voice*, *5 Calls*) and web sites that will send you action items that are broad in coverage

(e.g. www.jenniferhofman.com) or focused on specific areas of concern (e.g. www.aclu.org). Make your voice heard!