

## Contacting Your Representative or Senator: A Step By Step Guide

1. Do not use your office phone or e-mail address. You must make calls on your personal time (i.e. lunch break) and at no cost to your institution.
2. Find your Representative (and all contact information) at the following site:<https://writerep.house.gov/writerep/welcome.shtml> (Each person will have one; you will look him/her up by your zip code.)
3. Find your Senator at <http://www.senate.gov/> The "Find Your Senator" tab in the top right hand corner. (Each person will have 2 senators; you will look them up by state.)
4. In most cases, contact the Washington, D.C. office. If you are hoping to set up a visit with a Legislative Asst. *in* the district, contact the local Education Assistant in the location nearest you.

**Calling:** This is the most effective way to making an impact. Calls are generally very short (usually about 2 minutes) as the offices are very busy. Don't be concerned that you will need to defend your point. Your "job" is to tell them your position and urge the Representative or Senator to support your position.

- Call the D.C. Office; you can find the phone number at the sites above. Ask for the Education Assistant. First, tell the person "Thanks for your support of TRIO". Tell the Education Asst. the reason you are calling, i.e. "please support an increase in TRIO; I am opposed to the evaluation of Upward Bound, etc." If the Education Asst. is not available, you can leave a voicemail for the Education Asst. or tell the person who answers the phone your issue and ask that the message be given to the Education Asst.

**Handwritten Letter or Postcard:** This is the next best way to make an impact. First of all, state your purpose in writing (i.e. I am writing to urge you to support an increase in funding for TRIO programs.) If you are a TRIO participant or alumni, state the way TRIO has made an impact on you. If you are not a TRIO participant or alumni, state the reason you are asking the Senator or Congress person to support

your position. Be sure to sign the letter and print your name and address so that you can get a response.

**E-mail:** This is the least effective way to make an impact, but is still an important form of communication. E-mail the D.C. Office; you can find the address at the sites above. In your e-mail, be sure to thank your Representative or Senator for their support of TRIO. Then state your position on the current issue and ask for your Senator or Representative's support. If you are a current student or alumni, also state how TRIO has helped you and the reason TRIO is important to the country.

Overall, remember that the Senators and Congress persons work for YOU! You are not a burden. They want and need to hear what their constituents think on issues!

Your voice is important!!!! Please make it heard!