

Making Your Voice Heard

"... The government of the United States is not in Washington, not in the White House, not in the Capital....the government of the United States resides in us, we the people. What resides in Washington is the administration of our government."

— Mortimer J. Adler, 1987

How to Contact Your Government Officials

Contacting our elected or appointed officials about issues does make a difference!

Contact information for your U.S. elected representatives is at <http://usa.gov/Contact/Elected.shtml>

Staff members personally read each letter and also take phone calls, then give reports (and sometimes your letter) to the official. They do pay attention to public opinion and respond to every message. Particularly with low-profile issues, just a handful of phone calls and letters have been known to change a representative's vote.

Some methods are more effective than others. Phone calls have a greater impact than letters and, especially form letters. Letters and faxes have more leverage than postcards, and e-mails generally have the least influence of all. This doesn't mean you shouldn't send e-mails, but it is better to write a letter fax, or phone. A letter followed by a personal face-to-face visit is the best.

Suggestions for Writing Your Message

1. Keep your **letter brief and simple**. Limit it to three short paragraphs. You are writing a busy official. He or she needs to quickly glance at the letter and understand who you are and what concerns you.
2. Open and close with your **positive recommendation**.
3. Use the middle for (A) **compelling facts** and (B) **what the issue means to you personally**. Relate any personal experience you have had related to the problem or your proposed solution.
4. Clarify that **you live in the official's district**.
5. Be **respectful and polite**. Avoid negative or critical letters, but feel free to express pleasure or disappointment in the person's previous voting record. Thank them for what they have done right.
6. Include your **full name and title, signature, address, phone number, e-mail and Web site**.

"...people in the long run are going to do more to promote peace than are governments. Indeed, I think that people -want peace so much that one of these days governments had better get out of their way and let them have it."

— Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1959

Some People to Whom You Might Write

<p>President Barack Obama First Lady Michelle Obama The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, DC 20500 Comments: 202-456-1111 Switchboard: 202-456-1414 Fax: 202-456-2461 http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/</p>	<p>Vice President Joe Biden The White House</p>
<p>Senator Barbara Boxer 112 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510 Tel: 202-224-3553 Fax: 202-554-0454 S.F: 415-403-0100</p>	<p>Senator Dianne Feinstein 331 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510 Tel: 202-224-3841 Fax: 202-228-3954 S.F: 415-393-0707</p>
<p>The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton Secretary of State, Department of State 2201C Street NW Washington DC 20520 Tel: 202-647-4000 Fax: 202-261-8577</p>	<p>Representative Anna Eshoo 205 Cannon House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 Tel: 202-225-8104 Fax: 202-225-8890 Palo Alto: 650-323-2984</p>
<p>Congressman Jackie Speier 211 Cannon House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 Tel: 202-225-3531 Fax: 202-226-9789 San Mateo: 650-342-0300</p>	<p>Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi 235 Cannon House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 Tel: 202-225-4965 Fax: 202-225-8259 S.F: 415-556-4862</p>

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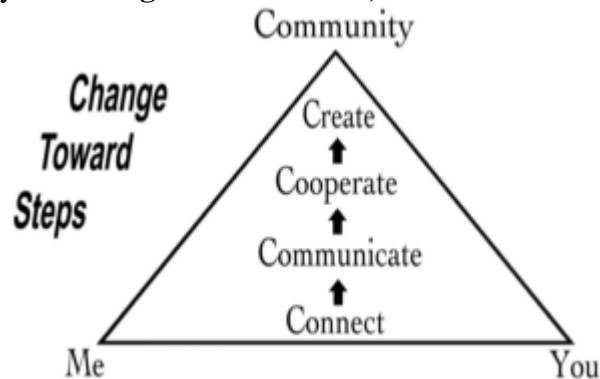
“Change doesn't come from Washington. Change comes to Washington.”

— Barack Obama, August 28, 2008

Together, citizens and governments create the future

In Dialogue, we diverse citizens are doing what governments cannot -- improving human communication and relationships as quickly, inclusively, and widely as we can.

The resulting creativity is allowing us to build small, successful models of our shared future.



These pictures we paint of community are required, because no people or government can overcome fear of going down a new road before seeing what life will look like around the corner.

“People become the stories they hear and the stories they tell,” Elie Wiesel reminds us.

As we discover new social intelligence, it is our responsibility in a democratic culture to educate and inform those who make laws and policies.

The Process of Change

Principle ► Local Dialogue ► National Dialogue ► National Consensus ► Law & Policy

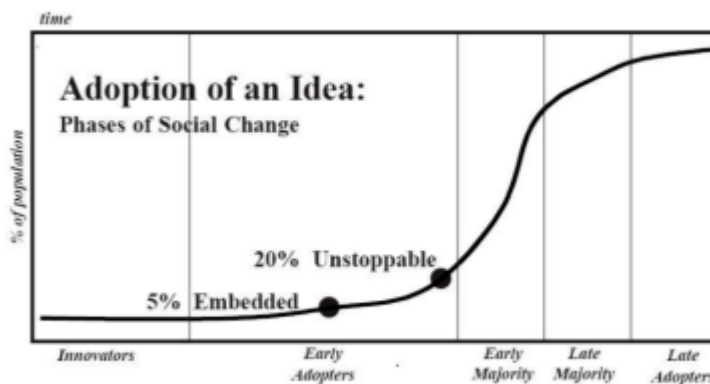
The Process of Change is said to begin with a (1) Principle – especially the interdependence of all life.

What follows is a (2) Local Dialogue expanding to a (2) National Dialogue about the Principle.

When people come to a (4) National Consensus, legislators follow the people and write (4) Laws based on the Principles adopted and modeled by the citizens.

One hazard among Innovators and Early Adopters is wanting to “skip steps” and the frustration and anger from not seeing national change even though a few citizen-models of new thinking and new models are working.

The Process of Social Change



The process of social change and the S-shaped curve. Professor Everett M. Rogers (Stanford Research Institute), *Diffusion of Innovations*, Third Edition, New York, Macmillan Free Press, Chapters 1 and 2, 1983

Citizens who wish to inform legislators and other policy-makers about their progress and preferences are often not sure how to do that, or if it makes a difference. It makes a difference; you make a difference!

Prepared by the Jewish-Palestinian Living Room Dialogue – San Mateo, California USA – Modified 25 February 2009

<http://traubman.igc.org/dg-prog.htm>