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To Stop the defamation of the Jewish people... to secure justice and fair treatment to all

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Advocating for Israel

How To Advocate To Elected Officials

Action Plan

- Lobby members at home
- Write letters
- Phone calls
- E-mail
- Invite Members of Congress to speak
- Host a Congressional staff briefing
- Develop a key contact network
- Develop contacts with local elected officials and candidates
- Organize congressional missions to Israel with community leaders

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Advocating to elected officials nationwide is crucial for ensuring that Israel's position is considered by our policymakers. The power of a targeted message of support for Israel from a constituent is immeasurable and there is much we can do to educate our representatives and impact policy.

Lobby Members at Home. There is no substitute for a Member of Congress hearing from constituents at home. Effective lobbying is an ongoing process of nurturing relationships over time. Prior to each Congressional recess, contact the District Scheduler of your Senators and Representatives to schedule meetings with your members to discuss current developments.

Write Letters. While a face-to-face meeting is most effective, letters are still the most common vehicle of communication with elected officials. Congressional staff monitor the number of letters received in support of or in opposition to an issue. Letters on policy issues should be sent to the Member's Washington office, with a copy to the local District Office. However, because the anthrax attack has slowed the distribution of mail on Capitol Hill, it would be wise to fax letters to Congressional offices until the mail back-up is remedied.

- Address only one issue per letter so the letter is directed to a specific staffer.
- Be concise and to the point. State the purpose of the letter up front.
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To a Senator:	To a Representative:
The Honorable (first name, last name)	The Honorable (first name, last name)
United States Senate	United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510	Washington, DC 20515

Phone Calls. Calls convey a heightened sense of urgency and are only warranted when legislative action is imminent. Congressional offices keep a tally of calls to gauge public sentiment in the district. Be prepared to supply your address. Call the Capitol switchboard, (202) 225-3121, to connect to your Member's office.

E-mail. For many, e-mail is the easiest method of communication. Although most offices do receive constituent communication via e-mail, keep in mind that e-mail gets the least attention in Congressional offices. However, Members' individual Web sites are useful for researching relevant statements made or action taken on the issue.

Invite Members of Congress to Speak. Members of Congress welcome opportunities to speak at community meetings or other events. Host forums and voter education/registration initiatives with

candidates to educate them about your concerns.

Host a Congressional Staff Briefing. Getting to know the Congressional staff in the district and in Washington is vital in facilitating ongoing communication with the Member of Congress and impacting policy. Congressional aides frequently step in to meet with constituents while Members are called to vote or attend committee hearings and meetings. Not only are they the Member's eyes and ears and help shape how a Member votes, but staffers often move on to leadership positions themselves. Staffers provide a vital link in facilitating ongoing communication with the Member of Congress. Take these meetings seriously and communicate your message.

Develop a Key Contact Network. Though elected officials value the opinion of community leaders, nothing compares to an individual constituent who can place a personal call to key public officials to say "thank you" or raise concerns.

Develop Contacts with Local Elected Officials and Candidates. The best relationships with officials are those which began in their early careers in state and local offices. Today's candidate for City Council may be tomorrow's Senator. Although these officials and candidates focus on local issues, they can be important voices in support of Israel in the community and beyond.

Organize Congressional Missions to Israel with Community Leaders. There is no substitute for having legislators visit Israel in person to get a sense of the security concerns and of Israel's quest for peace. Since Members prefer foreign trips to have relevance to their own constituency, community-based missions, which include constituents and local leaders, give the trip a multifaceted appeal.

SOURCE: http://www.adl.org/israel/advocacy/advocacy_for_israel/default.asp?xflag=2