

★ **How to Contact Your Member of Congress:**

- Dial (202) 224-3121 and request to be connected the U.S. representative or U.S. senator you would like to reach. The switchboard will patch you through to the office you've requested.
- If you need to confirm who represents you in Congress, you can do so by visiting this website: <https://www.congress.gov/members/find-your-member>

★ **Why Contacting Your Member of Congress Matters:**

- Your U.S. representative and U.S. senators are your voice in Congress. To best represent you and your interests, they need to hear about what you care about and what you want them to support. Calling their offices is the most direct and easiest way to give them this message.

★ **What You Should Be Prepared to Say:**

- Who you are and where you live:
 - Your name and home address, including **zip code**. Ensuring they know you are a constituent makes your message even more powerful.
- Why you're calling:
 - Asking your representative/senator to support the Congressional reauthorization of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program.
- Why this is important:
 - The DBE program helps to remedy past and present discrimination by providing women and minority-owned small businesses with opportunities to secure government contracts and access critical business networks.
 - Reauthorizing the DBE program means working to protect small, independent American businesses—**like yours**—and the local economies they keep alive.
 - There are more than 50,000 certified DBE companies in the U.S., employing over 500,000 people.
 - In Illinois, 3,389 DBE-certified businesses currently operate and compete for contracts, creating an estimated 33,890 good-paying jobs in their communities.
- Why this matters to you:
 - Share **your story** about your business and how the DBE program has helped support it.

★ **Best Practices:**

- State your name and address upfront:
 - Whether you're talking to a staffer or leaving a voicemail, make sure to say your name and address, including zip code, at the start. This makes it clear you are a constituent of this representative/senator.
- Be clear about what you're calling about.
 - State your "ask"—support for the reauthorization of the DBE program—clearly.
- Draft a script or notes for yourself.
 - Utilize the talking points above to help communicate key points about the program.
- Make it personal to you.
 - Share details about your business and why this program matters to you. Anyone can look up statistics about the DBE program but hearing why it's important to individual constituents will resonate even louder with elected officials.
- Be polite and concise.
 - Hill staffers field hundreds of calls a day. Keeping your message short, clear, and polite will make sure your message gets passed along to your representative or senator.