



ADVOCATING ON GLOBAL ISSUES DURING COVID-19

COVID-19 is one of the greatest challenges of our generation. Yet CARE advocates remain energized and more committed than ever to build back a more just and equal world for everyone.

With the world on lockdown during COVID-19, we've had to learn new ways of working and communicating with each other on what really matters, particularly ending global poverty and tackling racial and social injustices. **CARE advocates are social-distancing but remain connected** — online, on video, and over the phone — with fellow advocates, CARE staff, and Members of Congress. **This work matters now more than ever.** The pandemic has intensified long-standing injustices and inequities and will have a profound impact on women and girls worldwide.

Still, it's a challenging time to advocate on global issues — **our attention is consumed with issues at home and in our local communities** while traditional ways of connecting and showing up for what we care about are nearly impossible. **But a global pandemic requires global solutions** that will benefit us at home and around the world. We've learned that advocating using virtual tools can be just as influential as face-to-face interactions, especially when it's tailored to your Members of Congress.

This toolkit answers your questions about:

- How to use digital advocacy to reach Members of Congress and their staff
- How to research your elected officials and the types of digital communication they prefer
- How to talk about global issues with U.S. Congress members and their staff

Members of Congress Are Online!

Just like everyone else, Members of Congress can no longer rely on traditional ways of engaging in-person, but they are eager to connect with constituents online. They're using social media and video conferencing, hosting virtual townhalls, and connecting by email and phone to listen to their constituents and to share their opinions and policies. In fact, Congressional staff members tell us that:



- 89% are more willing to engage with constituents using technology now than they were before COVID-19!
- Nearly two-thirds of Congressional offices surveyed are having more numerous and substantive interactions with constituents.
- Engagement on social media, by phone and email have risen significantly and have opened new opportunities for Members of Congress and constituents to communicate.¹

¹ Source: Congressional Management Foundation, *The Future of Citizen Engagement: FUNDED BY A GRANT FROM DEMOCRACY FUND Coronavirus, Congress, and Constituent Communications*, Kathy Goldschmidt and Bradley Joseph Sinkaus

CARE's Advocacy Agenda During COVID-19

For people already living in crisis, the effects of COVID-19 will be devastating. CARE advocates for a global response to COVID-19 that includes a focus on the unique impact women and girls face by this crisis and the women's leadership needed to build back a more just, equitable world. Our health response focuses on four critical objectives:

- **Protecting and supporting** frontline health workers
- **Strengthening communities** to stop the spread of COVID-19
- Ensuring continuity of **lifesaving services**, including sexual and reproductive health care
- Standing with **women, girls and the most marginalized communities**

“As COVID-19 spreads, it is more evident than ever that there are far too many vulnerable people and too few resources for vulnerable communities.”

— Sheba Crocker, CARE's VP of Humanitarian Policy & Practice



WATCH: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, CARE has launched one of the largest emergency response efforts in our 75-year history to help stop the spread.

Making Global Issues A Priority for U.S. Congress

With everyone focused on issues at home, **our job as CARE advocates is to answer members questions about why U.S. global leadership is imperative for defeating COVID-19** and eradicating poverty for all. This pandemic is a global challenge, and our response must include efforts to safeguard vulnerable populations around the world.

“What you can do today will make all the difference for tomorrow. The world can only be safe if all of us are safe.”

— Deepmala Mahla, CARE’s Regional Director for Asia

When speaking with Members of Congress, their staff, or even community members, include talking points such as these:

- **COVID-19 has made it clear how connected and vulnerable we all are**, no matter where we live. Global health and public health cannot be separated.
- **The urgent humanitarian crises we faced pre-COVID-19 have only become more desperate and volatile**, which threatens global security.
- **The world is struggling to recover** from COVID-19’s devastating impact on individuals, families, global health, and human rights.
- **Global recovery from COVID-19 demands that we meet the needs of the world’s most vulnerable people**. It’s the sensible, compassionate and strategic thing to do.
- **With economies shuttered by COVID-19**, more than 500 million people are at risk of slipping back into poverty.
- **The pandemic will have a profound impact on women and girls** — especially those living in poverty, in countries experiencing conflict, and in refugee/displacement settings.

CARE COVID-19 Resource List

As we have for 75 years, CARE is working in some of the world’s most isolated places, with deeply vulnerable people who face an unprecedented crisis. Since the start of the pandemic, CARE has published numerous reports and resources on the effects of COVID-19 and potential solutions. [Check out the full list here.](#)

- **[Global Rapid Gender Analysis for COVID-19](#)**: This analysis by CARE and the IRC explores the current and potential gendered dimensions of COVID-19 and the ways in which women, girls, and other marginalized people are likely to suffer from the pandemic.
- **[Gender Equality, Food Security and COVID](#)**: This review examines how COVID-19 will challenge women and their food and nutrition security.
- **[She Told Us So: Filling the Data Gap to Build Back Equal](#)**: This first-of-its-kind research reveals differing perspectives between men and women when it comes to the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Making Connections During COVID-19

Every note and phone call a Congress member receives is officially recorded. **That means every time you voice your support for something, it counts.** CARE depends on its advocates to share our mission for a better, more just world through online petitions, virtual meetings, and video conferences. Getting started is easier than you might think!

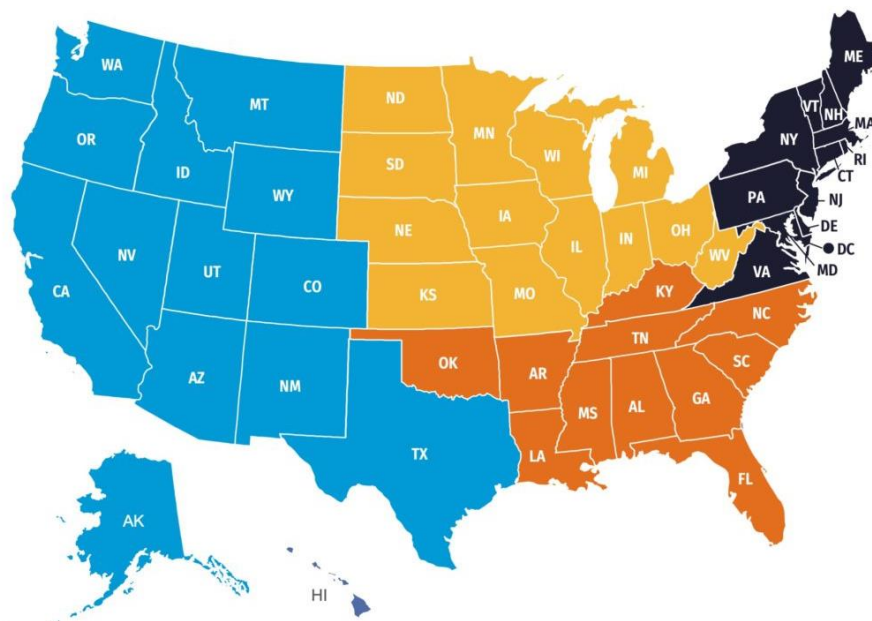
1. Find your Regional Advocacy Manager

CARE Action's team of **Regional Advocacy Managers** are spread throughout the U.S. to be your connection to CARE's legislative agenda and to mentor you on influencing policymakers. Find your Regional Advocacy Manager based on where you live and send them a quick email introducing yourself – they'll respond right back and help you find the best way to advocate based on your experience and comfort level.

CARE Action's Regional Advocacy Managers can help you:

- Find online and virtual advocacy opportunities in your district
- Join trainings and webinars that fit with your schedule
- Learn more about CARE's priorities and global work
- Amplify CARE's mission with friends and family

Find Your Regional Advocacy Manager



WEST
Johnathan Young
Johnathan.Young@care.org

MIDWEST
Katie Kraft
Katie.Kraft@care.org

NORTHEAST
Savannah Fox
Savannah.Fox@care.org

SOUTHEAST
Whitney Griggs
Whitney.Griggs@care.org

2. Get to know your Members of Congress online

It only takes a quick visit online to find your House Representative and Senators who represent you in Congress. Visit govtrack.us/congress/members, enter your address, and find out who represents you today.

EXERCISE:

Map your Member of Congress [here](#)

Global issues become more relevant when they connects with people’s life experiences, education, travel, history, faith, and communities. Do a little research and find out if your Member of Congress has a military background or if they’ve lived in another country. Maybe they belong to a faith community that provides service in developing countries or maybe they’ve hosted an international student. **There’s always some connection that makes global issues relevant, personal or important. As advocates, your job is to make that connection.**

3. Pick up the phone

Every single Congressional office can be reached through the U.S. Capitol switchboard. It’s a quick and easy way to ensure your elected officials hear your voice and know what issues matter to their constituents. A switchboard operator will connect you directly with the Senate or House office you request. **Your representative will not be the one answering the call.** Rather, a staffer who talks to constituents frequently will pick up your call. **Keep talking points or a short script in front of you** to ensure you remain on message and communicate effectively. You only need 2-3 minutes of material!

Write your message down and say something like this:

Call Script Template:

Hi, my name is _____ and I live in _____.

I’m a constituent of the Senator/Congressperson and a supporter of CARE, and I’m calling about _____.

I want the Senator/Congressperson to know that I hope he/she will support/reject/demand/sign/vote for/sponsor/co-sponsor _____ (name of bill or issue).

I would appreciate a written response from the Senator/Congressperson. My address is _____.

Thank you.

Call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121

4. Use social media

Your Members of Congress are on social media to stay connected with their constituents and to share what they're working on. Members are also using social media livestreams to supplement in-person events and town halls.

- **Follow your Members of Congress wherever they have a presence:** Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.
- Watch their feeds for opportunities to join **Twitter parties, Facebook and Instagram Live events**, or virtual townhalls. These opportunities are free and open to everyone.
- **Follow CARE on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#)** to stay up to date on our priority issues and advocacy work. We'll let you know when we need help reaching elected officials on critical issues!
- Comment, like, and share CARE posts and posts from your Members of Congress to ensure your followers see the importance of this work. **A single post has the potential to influence hundreds of people.** Posting several times makes an even greater impression.



5. Join a Virtual Town Hall

Town halls are open forums where elected officials can give legislative updates and answer questions from constituents. While most in-person town halls have been suspended due to COVID-19, many Congressional members are pivoting towards Tele-Town Halls conducted by conference call or online.

Visit TownHallProject.com to find virtual events near you!

