

American Promise Candidate Pledge: **GUIDE TO CONTACTING YOUR REPRESENTATIVES**

The American Promise Candidate Pledge is a volunteer-led effort to get candidates and elected officials at all levels of government to pledge on the record that they will use their office to advance the 28th Amendment.

It's simple for every American to participate. This toolkit will help you effectively reach out to candidates and incumbents in your area to ask them to sign the pledge.

HOW TO FIND YOUR OFFICIALS AND CANDIDATES:

The American Promise Pledge is for candidates and elected officials at all levels of government.

Find your local, state and federal representatives, as well as all 2018 congressional candidates, at

[ballotpedia.org/
Sample_Ballot_Lookup](http://ballotpedia.org/Sample_Ballot_Lookup).

Once you've identified the candidate or incumbent you want to focus on, follow these steps:



- 1) Visit the official's website to find the preferred contact method. Reach out to the candidate using this method. If you would like a script, use the one in this document.
- 2) One week after initial outreach, **follow up by phone**.
- 3) Elected officials are short on time. **Ask for a 15- to 30-minute meeting**, which is more likely to be accepted than longer meetings.
- 4) At the meeting, tell your official why you are concerned about this issue. **Bring a copy of the attached Candidate Pledge and Candidate Pledge Fact Sheet** to discuss and leave with the candidate. Before leaving the meeting, ask when and how you can follow up next.
- 5) One week after the meeting, **follow up as requested**.

QUESTIONS AND NEXT STEPS: Questions along the way? We're here to help. If your candidate or elected official declines to sign, or expresses any reservation about the pledge, please send us as much information as you have so we can track that feedback. To get in touch, please email Johannes Epke: johannes@americanpromise.net.

IMPORTANT TIPS FOR TALKING TO CANDIDATES:



Highlight that this is not just an issue you care about as an individual, but that the issue of getting big money out of politics has broad, cross-partisan support across the nation. If you represent an American Promise Association or another citizen group that supports the 28th Amendment, be sure to mention that, too.

If you can't get a meeting, go to where the candidate will already be: a town hall or other public appearance (these are usually listed on candidates' websites). While there, respectfully ask: "Have you heard of the 28th Amendment to get big money out of politics? Will you learn about it?" Your goal is to have the candidate make a public statement that s/he will take the next step of learning about the issue.

Make the 28th Amendment a hot topic. Some ideas:

- Write a letter to the editor before you reach out to your candidate and include the published letter when you reach out.
- Organize with fellow citizens to make sure the candidate is asked about the 28th Amendment at their next three public events.
- Organize with your local American Promise Association (find yours at americanpromise.net/take_action) or another group to send 20 emails in one day, or three emails a day for a week, asking about the 28th Amendment.

Be sure the candidate knows that if s/he signs the pledge, you and your fellow citizens will share that information and promote their signing of the pledge.

ASK FOR A MEETING SCRIPT:

Hello, my name is _____ and I live in [city, town, state or district]. I'm reaching out as [one of many concerned citizens OR the representative of a local volunteer group called —American Promise Association or other organization name—] about the issue of big money in politics. As you may know, 77% of Americans of both parties believe there should be limits on the amount of money spent in political campaigns. Yet the Supreme Court has prohibited us, citizens and legislators, from setting limits on big money in our political system, ruling this money is protected free speech. We know this is an issue of concern for both citizens and elected officials. We believe a constitutional amendment is the best way to enable citizens and legislators to set common-sense, fair limits on political spending. Already, 19 states and more than 800 cities and towns have formally called for an amendment, and more than 200 elected officials and candidates have signed a pledge vowing to support the 28th Amendment if elected. Would you have 15 to 30 minutes in the coming weeks for us to meet and briefly discuss this issue?

