

Table of Contents

(Click on the link to go to the corresponding topic)

- [Tips for Making Calls](#)
- [Voicemail Script](#)
- [Talking Points with Tips](#)
- [Email Template](#)

Tips for Making Calls

Options:

- Call the legislator during office hours
- Call after hours to leave a message (see script) and follow up with an email
- Only send an email (less effective)

Before the Call

- **Know Your Key Points:** Familiarize yourself with the main talking points, such as rescues being overwhelmed by intake requests, lack of pet store education, and the impact of RHDV2.
- **Personalize Your Message:** Be ready to share your own experience as a foster volunteer or your observations of the issue to make the call more impactful.
- **Stay Brief:** Prepare to keep the conversation concise – about 2-3 minutes. Legislators and their staff are busy and appreciate clear, focused communication.
- **Practice First:** If you're nervous, practice what you want to say with another volunteer or in front of a mirror

During the Call

- **Introduce Yourself Clearly:**
 - Start by giving your name, your role with the rescue if associated with one OR why you are concerned with this issue (ex I am an animal lover, there is a problem with rabbits in our community, etc). Also indicate your connection to the legislator if applicable (e.g., you're a constituent)
 - Example, "Hi my name is [Your Name], and I am a volunteer with [Rescue Name]. I live in [City/Area] and I'm one of your constituents. OR "Hi my name is [Your Name], and I understand that counties throughout the state are seeing increased cases of stray rabbits"
- **State the Purpose of Your Call:**
 - Be clear and direct about why you are calling
 - Example: "I'm calling to urge you to support a ban on the sale of pet rabbits because of the overwhelming impact rabbit abandonment has on foster rescues like ours"
- **Stick to Key Points:**
 - Highlight 2-3 main points that resonate most with the legislator's priorities, such as animal welfare, agriculture protection, or public health concerns.
 - Use facts and examples from your foster experience but avoid overwhelming them with too much information.
- **Be Polite and Professional:**
 - Speak respectfully, even if the legislator or staff member seems indifferent or disagrees.
 - Avoid criticizing or debating; focus on sharing your perspective and making a positive case.
- **Offer a Follow-Up:**
 - Let them know you're available for further discussion or to provide additional information.
 - Example: "If you'd like to learn more or hear about our work with foster rabbits, I'd be happy to connect with you." OR "I am happy to connect you with one of the rescues in the state who can speak about their direct experience with domestic rabbits."

After the Call:

- **Say Thank You:**
 - Always thank the legislator or their staff for their time, even if it was brief
- **Make Notes:**
 - Write down how the call went and any feedback or questions the legislator's office had. This can help us track progress.
- **Follow Up:**
 - Send an email thanking them for the conversation and reiterating your main points. Offer to provide any additional information they might need

Vocicemail Script

“Hello, my name is **[Your Name]** and I’m calling on behalf of **[Rescue Name]**, which is overwhelmed with intake requests for abandoned rabbits.” OR “Hello, my name is **[Your Name]** and I am a constituent in your district. I am concerned about the welfare of domestic rabbits.” **then** “Rabbits are the third most surrendered animal, often purchased impulsively from pet stores that provide little to no education about their care needs.”

We’re asking for your support to ban the sale of pet rabbits. In addition to reducing intake requests and preventing feral populations, this measure could help mitigate the spread of Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus 2, a highly contagious and deadly disease that poses a significant threat to both domestic rabbits and wild populations. Feral outbreaks can also harm agriculture and local communities.

Encouraging adoption over sales ensures rabbits find responsible homes and aligns with growing public support for animal welfare.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me at **[Your Phone Number]** if you would like to discuss this further.

Again, my name is **[Your Name]** and you can reach me at **[Your Phone Number]**.

Thank you

Talking Points with Tips

Tips:

- Speak confidently
- Share personal stories where possible to make the conversation more compelling

Start with an Introduction:

- Introduce yourself: “Hi, my name is “[Your Name], and *if applicable* I’m a volunteer with [Rescue Name].” *Mention if you are a constituent in their district.*
- Share your experience: “I work directly with abandoned rabbits and see firsthand the challenges caused by their overpopulation and lack of care.” OR “I care about domestic animals being abandoned and their impact on the environment.”

Key Points to Highlight:

- Rescue Overcrowding:
 - Rabbits are the third most surrendered animal in shelters, often purchased on impulse without understanding their care needs.
 - Our rescue is overwhelmed with abandoned rabbits, putting us at high risk to no longer be able to accommodate intake requests.
- Lack of Education in Pet Stores:
 - Pet stores rarely educate buyers about the long-term care rabbits require, including proper diets, housing, behaviors, and medical needs. This leads to neglect and abandonment.
- Feral Populations and Agricultural Impacts
 - When rabbits are abandoned outdoors, they can form feral populations, which harm local communities and cause damage to crops and property.
 - Farmers in particular are impacted by feral rabbits eating crops and damaging land.
 - ***Due to their short gestation period, a pair of rabbits could produce over 3.7 million rabbits in 4 years. It is easy to see how a couple of strays can result in a colony struggling for survival and presenting a menace to neighborhoods.***
- Disease Concerns (RHDV2)
 - Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus 2 (RHDV2) is highly contagious and can spread through domestic and wild rabbit populations. Outbreaks could pose a serious threat to agriculture.
- Promoting Responsible Pet Ownership
 - Banning pet rabbit sales would encourage people to adopt from rescues, where they receive education and proper care, ensuring rabbits go to informed, committed homes.
 - Additionally, rabbits that come from are already spayed or neutered and vaccinated against RHDV2.
- Proven Success of Similar Policies
 - Cities like San Francisco and New York City have banned rabbit sales, and it’s helped reduce abandonment and shelter intake.

Call to Action

- I hope you’ll consider supporting a ban on the sale of pet rabbits in stores, at flea markets and by backyard breeders to address these issues. Since most rabbit rescues

are foster-based, they see the impact of abandonment firsthand, as rely entirely on volunteers to provide temporary homes for these animals

- Rescues are often at capacity, which limits how many rabbits can be helped. A ban would significantly reduce this burden and allow rescues to focus on finding permanent, responsible homes for these animals.
- Offer a follow-up:
 - If you'd like more information or want to hear more about rabbit rescue programs, I'd be happy to connect you with our team.

Email Template

Subject: Addressing Concerns about Rabbit Welfare and Community Impacts

Dear **[Legislator's or Rep's Name]**,

My name is **[Your Name]**, and I'm reaching out on behalf of **[Your Rescue's Name]**, which is currently overwhelmed with intake requests for abandoned rabbits. OR My name is **[Your Name]**, and I'm reaching out on behalf of domestic rabbits who are more frequently being seen as strays in Florida. Rabbits are the third most surrendered animal, largely because they are purchased impulsively from pet stores, flea markets and backyard breeders that provide little to no education about their care needs.

We urge you to support a ban on the sale of pet rabbits. This measure would:

- Reduce rescue intakes, easing the burden on already strained resources
- Prevent feral rabbit populations, which can harm agriculture and disrupt local communities.
 - ***Due to their short gestation period, a pair of rabbits could produce over 3.7 million rabbits in 4 years***
- Help mitigate the spread of Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus 2 (RHDV2), a highly contagious and deadly disease that threatens domestic and wild rabbits and poses a potential risk to agriculture operations

Encouraging adoption over sales ensures rabbits are placed in responsible, informed homes while aligning with growing public support for animal welfare. Communities like San Francisco and New York City have already adopted similar measures with proven success.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me at **[Your Phone Number]** or **[Your Email Address]** if you would like to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

[Your Full Name]

[Your Position, if applicable]

[Your Rescue's Name]

[Your Contact Information]