

HOW TO BIRD-DOG YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

What is "bird-dogging?"

When you address your elected officials in public, it can spur them to take action quickly! We call this “bird-dogging” — showing up in person at your member of Congress’s public events and asking them if they’ve read the Mueller report. And it becomes more effective when it happens multiple times: at every public event, with activists there, putting your Congressperson on the spot, and insisting on a straight answer.

Step 1: Recruit some friends

Bird-dogging is a lot more effective if you have a team of people who agree show up at a member’s public appearance. If you need help to try to find someone to go with you to an event near you, email Izzy at izzy@commoncause.org and we’ll try to connect you.

Step 2: Find your member

In the coming months, all members of Congress should be attending and hosting public events frequently. Start by looking at their website, reading the paper, Googling, or calling their district office directly and asking about upcoming events in your neighborhood. The best opportunities are events where the legislator will be taking questions or will be somewhat approachable!

Step 3: Prepare for the event

Look over the www.willcongressact.org website (especially the About page!) to develop 3-4 talking points about why it’s so important for your Congressperson to take action on the Mueller report. Include some language about Congress’s duty to hold the executive branch accountable and protect our democracy, then ask if the member has read the report in full.

Then, assign someone to record you on video while you talk to your member (or assign someone to do the talking while you record). If you have more than two team members, train as many of them as possible to ask the question: “Have you read the entire Mueller report?” The more people prepped to ask the question, the more likely you are to get a response!

Step 4: Attend the event & ask your question

Keep it simple! The key is to be respectful — but also relentless and highly visible. Once you are at the event, your goal is to publicly ask the legislator this question: “Have you read the entire Mueller report?”

Step 5: Don’t give up!

It might take multiple meetings to get your member of Congress to realize that you aren’t giving up easily! But if you keep going and make sure your representative knows that you’re not stopping, they will eventually respond.