Yes, You Can Still Make a Difference

By [your name]

Now that the election is over, I’ve heard lots of people asking the same question: What do we do now? What can *I* do?

I think the answer is: a lot more than we may realize. It’s easy to feel overwhelmed, or like nothing you do will matter anyway.

But it does. Despite the incredibly polarized political climate, Congress still works for us, the voters — and believe it or not, they are listening. Even if you think they don’t agree with you, even if they are a member of the opposing political party, they are listening.

In the days after the election, I saw numerous posts on social media suggesting people contact their members of Congress about new political appointees or the future of the Affordable Care Act. But what if you could actually develop a relationship with your member of Congress, and meet with their staff a few times a year about the issues you care about most? What if, in the intervening months, you were publishing op-eds and letters-to-the-editor in the local newspaper that your representatives read daily? What if by taking these actions you could actually help to influence — and sometimes even change — public policy for the better?

Old-fashioned advocacy can take more time and effort than signing an online petition or clicking a link, but it works. I’ve seen firsthand that my advocacy efforts — and my words, my actions — *can* make a difference*. [Personal anecdote about an advocacy action you’ve taken].*

I don’t want to minimize the challenges, uncertainty, or division in our country right now and what may be ahead. That’s why it’s even more important to stand up for what we believe in and make our voices heard. Together we can fight off threats, and we can advance good policies instead – but only if Congress hears from us.

If you’re burning to get involved but don’t know how to start, there are plenty of organizations that can help, like [RESULTS](http://www.results.org/), where I volunteer, and where I’ve learned to use my voice to influence political decisions that will bring an end to poverty. Since 1980 we’ve worked across the aisle to make progress.

If there is anything I’ve learned as an advocate, it’s that persistence pays off and giving up is not an option. We can’t give up. We all have a role to play.