

Tips On Contacting Your Legislator by Phone or In Person

Keep your message brief and to the point. If the Rep or Senator has questions that you cannot answer, tell them you will find out and get back to them.

1. Identify yourself as a constituent: use the name of your town if you don't know your district number
2. State your position and identify any legislation that may be applicable; for example: I am calling to ask you to support HB171, an act that would outlaw the eating of ice cream.
3. Know your legislator's position on the issue: if you don't know, this is the time to find out, you are communicating, not arguing.
4. Reiterate your position by talking about how it will impact you personally or impact someone you care about or impact a substantial number of people or affect the state's budget. (sometimes all the above!)
5. Be aware of the budget: any bill with a fiscal note (FN) signals dollar signs. Acknowledge that you are aware of budget constraints, but that the need for social services does not disappear because money is not allocated for it.
6. Timing is important: 2-5 days before a vote seems to be about right - it is sometimes difficult to know enough in advance, and some issues are big enough to transcend the timing concern - such as voting rights or the state budget.
7. End your conversation with a question: Can I count on your support? or May I send you information that will clarify what we discussed?
8. If the legislator is on your side of the issue, ask if they will speak to other legislators to try to influence their positions. Or ask if there are any legislators they think may need persuading.
9. Thank the legislator for taking the time to listen.
10. Follow up with a note of thanks or disappointment after the vote.