

## How to Contact and Speak to Your Legislators

Legislators write the laws that affect every citizen's daily lives. They have the power to shape not only daily life, but also policy for years to come.

As elected officials, never forget that legislators work for you, their constituents.

They appreciate hearing from their constituents because it allows them to craft legislation that aligns with your values.

When you **contact your legislator**, be sure to be clear, concise, polite, and respectful of their time. It also helps to provide a little background on yourself and your situation in order to paint a vivid picture of why the issues matter to you personally.

When thinking about urging your legislator to take action on a bill or issue, keep the following tips in mind:

**Contact Method:** You may want to tailor your contact method to the urgency of the bill or issue at hand. If a vote is imminent, a phone call is usually the most effective and efficient way to contact your legislator's office. If time allows, however, email, or traditional mail is a great way to influence their vote and tell your story.

**Know your stuff!** It's important to be able to speak articulately and succinctly about the issue and your position on it. Legislators are inundated with information and concerned with multiple issues at once, and need you to be able to focus their attention. Be clear about what you believe, what actions you want them to take, and why it's important to people like you. Don't be afraid to ask questions about your legislator's stance on a particular issue, and be ready to answer questions from them about yours.

Be nice! When you contact your legislator, remember that you may not be able to speak to them directly. Their staffers represent them in their professional capacity, so treat them with the same respect you would give your legislator. Remember that even if you disagree on the issues, they still represent you. Additionally, building relationships with staffers can pay dividends in the future, the next time you contact the office.