

CONTACTING ELECTED OFFICIALS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL INTERACTIONS WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS

Get to know your legislator. Any contact you make will be more effective if you have a relationship based on past work or support. Letter writing campaigns may get the message across, but they aren't as effective as personal contact based on a past history of support and credibility. Personal letters and phone calls can be helpful if you follow a couple of simple rules:

Six simple rules to follow when writing to a legislator:

- 1. E-mail is the preferred method of communication.** Most legislators prefer e-mail because it is faster, and more convenient to respond to and track. If writing by e-mail, use your home or personal e-mail account and be sure to include your home address so the legislator knows you are a constituent.
- 2. Personalize your message.** Use your own words and tell your story. Don't just cut and paste or forward scripts you may have been provided. If you're writing to several legislators on the same subject, use separate e-mails. Do not send form letters.
- 3. Be constructive.** Don't make demands; don't make threats. Suggest, don't demand, a course of action. Don't promise rewards, and don't insult the opposition.
- 4. Be precise and keep it short.** If writing about a bill, identify the bill in the subject line. Clearly identify the issue you are writing about, and only discuss one issue or bill per letter. List the primary reasons and arguments for your position. Be specific. Using a few facts and figures to support your position is more effective than just stating your opinion. Explain the impact of the legislation or issue has on you and other constituents. What needs are being met, or unmet?
- 5. Express your appreciation -- say thank you.**
- 6. If you don't hear back in a week, follow through with a phone call.**

APPROPRIATE FORMS OF ADDRESS AND SALUTATION

For the Governor:

Office of the Governor
State Capitol, Room 160
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Dear Governor (last name):
Message text...

For a State Senator:

The Honorable (full name)
State Senator (if to President, use *President of the Senate*)
[if legislature not in session]: Interim address
[if in session] State Capitol (room number)
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Senator (last name):
Message text...

For a State Representative:

The Honorable (full name)
State Representative (if to Speaker, use *Speaker of the House*)
[if legislature not in session] Interim address
[if in session] State Capitol (room number)
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Representative (last name):
Message text...

For a U.S. Representative:

The Honorable (full name)
U.S. House of Representatives
(room number) House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative (last name):
Message text...

For a U.S. Senator:

The Honorable (full name)
U.S. Senate
(room number) Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator (last name):
Message text...

LET US HELP

Government Relations will always try to help you tailor or target your message to legislators to make your contact more effective. If you would like assistance, please contact us at (541) 737-4514.

Please copy all legislative correspondence to us at the following address:

Government Relations
652 Kerr Administration Building
Oregon State University
Corvallis, OR 97331-2126