

COMMUNICATING WITH A MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATURE OR THEIR STAFF

If you are not sure who represents the area where you live or work, go to:

<http://www.elections.il.gov/DistrictLocator/DistrictOfficialSearchByAddress.aspx> input your work or home address and you can get the information concerning federal, state, and county representatives.

Work on establishing business professional relationships with legislators and their staff. Find out what form of communication is preferred (phone, fax, letter, e-mail).

When the House and or Senate are in session, check the calendar for their schedules. In general, legislators are in their local offices on Monday or Friday. Tuesday thru Thursday they are usually in Springfield.

You can contact a legislator to support an issue, as well as to oppose an issue. Be positive about your point of view, avoid rude/crude/threatening/ and negative comments about individuals or groups with a different point of view.

If the legislator is not available, ask to speak with one of their legislative aides. Make sure to get their name. Make sure they understand your issue and position. Ask for an appointment with the legislator or return communications from them. Make sure they have your correct contact information.

Have your talking points ready. Stick to one issue and remember that all 59 State Senators and 118 Representatives have numerous issues they are trying to address.

No matter how you choose to contact any legislator, please keep the following in mind:

- Let them know who you are and where you live. Let them know your credentials and qualifications.
- Be clear and concise about the Bill or issue that concerns you. If you have a Bill number and title, make sure to include it.
- Let them know your position and the action you would like them to take. Tell them why you feel the way you feel.
- Let them know the impact of the proposed legislation on: you, your family, co-workers, and community. Give them an example if possible.
- Keep a communications to an individual issue.
- Ask for a response to your communications. Make sure to listen to their response.
- Be patient. Some issues might require follow-up by the legislator. Many issues are complex and progress toward your ultimate goal may take time and compromise.
- Thank them for making time to address your issue. Keep in mind all legislators sit on multiple committees.
- Never promise campaign contributions or gifts to legislators or their staff.