

YOU ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Every day we are confronted with issues that affect our lives. When an issue is important to you, you can make a difference when you get involved. Just follow the right steps, talk to the right people in the right ways and you can impact public policy.

Capitol Strategies is committed to representing its clients positions and insuring that your voice is heard in the halls of government, but we also need your help to be effective.

Legislators need to hear from those they represent. They want to know how different issues affect the voters that put them in office. That is their top priority – to represent their constituency.

How to be effective

1. Get to know your legislators – Attend their town hall meetings, talk to them when you see them around town or when they are on the campaign trail. Try to understand their background and their motivation. It is always easier to communicate with someone you know and it is a legislator's job to get to know you too.
2. Call to express your concerns – Nothing can better express your concerns than your own voice. A personal call to your legislator carries a lot of weight. Every office has a toll-free number, and most senators and representatives also publish their district or home phone numbers.
3. Send a personal letter – Form letters are not very effective. A personal letter is much better. When writing about an issue or a legislative proposal, your message carries more weight if you can explain how the measure would affect you (see how to write an effective letter also on this website).
4. Attend Public Hearings – When an issue you are interested in comes up for a public hearing, it is very important that you try to attend the meeting to tell the committee reviewing the bill why it should be passed, modified or defeated. Your personal insights will help them in making an informed decision on the legislation.
5. Any contact is better than none – As the last resort, you can send form letters, faxes or email. This is not as effective as a phone call or personal letter, but it will still the legislator's attention.

Remember that it is also very important to not just inform the legislator on your position, but also to ask them to do something, whether it be introducing legislation, supporting bills, or helping to kill or modify measures that are detrimental, they need to clearly know what you are asking of them.