



Communicating with Legislators

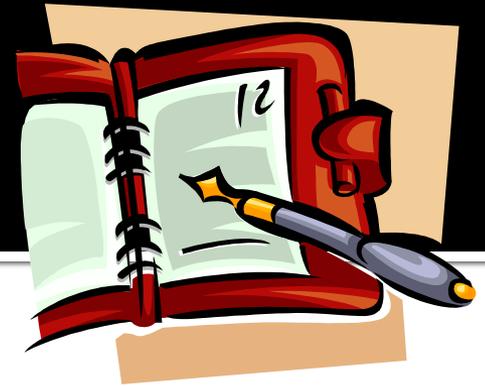
Adapted from presentation created by
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How to Make Contact

- Make an Appointment
- Catch them between meetings
- Send a note in to the “floor”
- Letters & E-Mail
- Phone Messages



Make an Appointment



- Contact the Legislator by phone (or their staff if they have any) and ask when you can meet with them.
- You can use the “Legislator Appointment Contact” sheet to prepare before you call.
- Write down the time of the meeting and ask how to contact the legislator on that day.

Making the Call: Sample

“Hello, my name is John Public and I live in Idaho Falls. I will be in Boise on January 31st and would like to meet with Senator Davis. Does he have some time to meet with me that day?”

They may ask what the meeting is about...

“I would like to talk to him about how important Medicaid services are to me/my family and how the recent changes have effected me/us.”

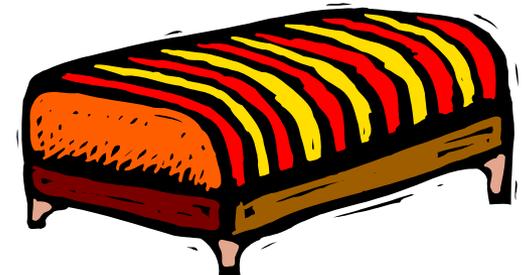
Catch them Between Meetings

If you are not able to make an appointment, you may be able to find your Legislator at the Statehouse. During the day Legislators are either in session, in committee, or talking to people.

- Look up their committees and the committee schedules at this web address:

<http://legislature.idaho.gov/sessioninfo/agenda.htm>

- Wait outside the committee room.



Send a Note in to the “Floor”

- During a session Legislators can be contacted on the House or Senate floor by sending a note to them through the Doorkeeper. This person sits outside the entrance to the Senate or the House.
- The note should have your name and address, the bill or issue you want to talk about, and a note asking to speak to them “in the lobby.”

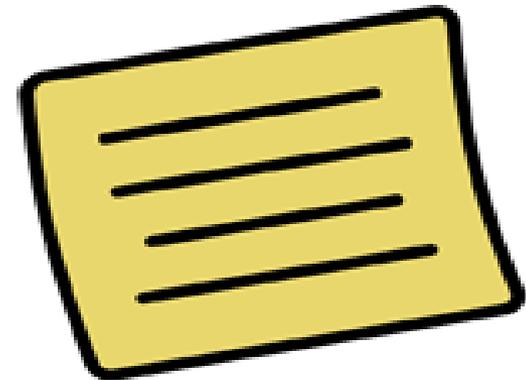


Send a note in to the “floor”: Sample

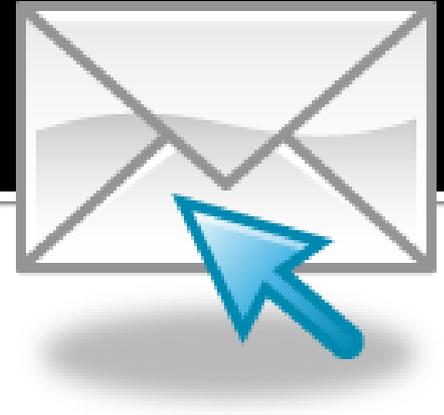
Senator Jones:

I live in Idaho Falls and I am very concerned about HB 202. I am here in the lobby if you are able to take a few minutes to talk to me. If not, please let me know when we can meet.

John Q. Public



Letters & E-Mail



- Make your point(s) in short statements.
- Follow up with supporting facts.
- Add personal stories and concerns.
- Ask them to support your position.
- Include fact sheets if you have them.

At the Meeting

- Know your message, be direct and truthful.
- Take written comments, a fact sheet, or other materials to leave with them.
- Ask for their support.
- If you live in their legislative district, say so.
- Respect their time.



Sharing Your Position and Getting Maximum Impact

- Legislators want to hear from regular people, not just lobbyists.
- Tell them how the bill will affect you and your family.
- They like stories (short ones).
- **Do not** be partisan. (don't say you agree only with Democrats or Republicans – in fact don't even bring up political parties)



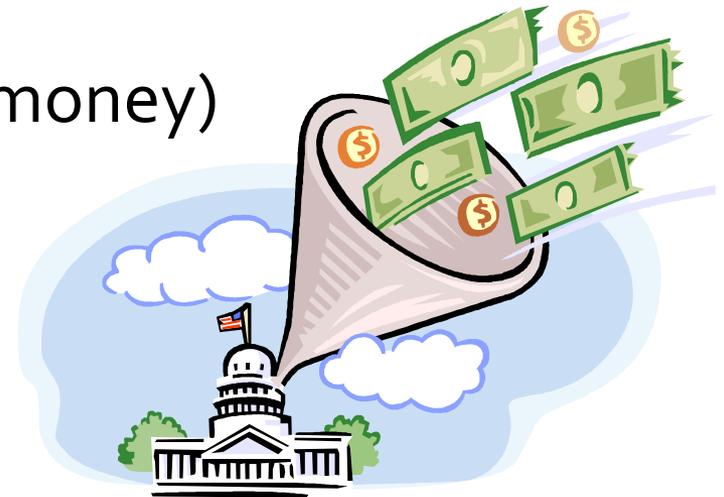
Getting Maximum Impact

- **Do Not** express anger or threats toward legislators.
- **Do Not** criticize or insult other people or legislators.
- **Do Not** question why someone else said or did something.
- **Do Not** exaggerate.



Getting Maximum Impact

- Try to align your message to things legislators care about:
 - Freedom of choice
 - Individual responsibility
 - Fiscal responsibility
(being careful with taxpayer money)
 - Family values
 - Good Government



Getting Maximum Impact

- Show them why you think this makes sense
 - Have current facts & figures
 - Talk about the impact on government, economy, service systems
- Help them relate emotionally
 - Personal stories
 - Real people
 - Real impacts on families



Let's Practice
