

How To Engage With Your Legislators





Guidelines For Meeting a Policy Maker

1. Prepare For The Meeting

Make

Make an appointment.

Learn

Learn about the policy maker's stand on your issues and on important legislation (is he/she a co-sponsor of the bill, etc.)

Plan

Plan what you want to say.

Decide

Decide who will lead the discussion.

2. During the Meeting

- Keep introductions short.
- Limit small talk and focus on meeting objective.
- Tell the policy maker your position.
- Discuss one to two important issues.
- Pay attention to nonverbal gestures.
- Stay focused until points are conveyed.
- Ask to take photo with the policy maker at the end of the meeting.
- Explain to policy maker how the picture will be used.

3. Share your Personal Stories

- Explain why it is important for policy maker to be interested in your issues.
- Ask for the policy maker's position on your issues and reason for it.
- Talk about how you are personally affected by the issue and share your one page story.
- Explain why your personal story is important and how other people are also affected.
- Offer to provide additional information.



4. Make Request(s) Specific

Explain

Explain why it is important for policy maker to be interested in your issue.

Request

Request specific action by policy maker (Such as co-sponsor a bill, oppose a certain amendment, speak in support of or in opposition to an amendment, visit a program in home community, give a speech, etc.).

Propose

Propose a meeting or visit to program in home district.

5. Write a Thank You

- Write a thank you letter for the visit and summarize what was discussed.
- List what you said you would deliver.



6. Provide Feedback to The Arc of KY Staff



- Report to The Arc Kentucky staff about your meeting.
- Describe the policy maker's response.
- Describe the nonverbal communications by the policy makers staff.
- Report what you promised to provide to the policy maker in response to issues raised.
- Ask The Arc what follow-up is appropriate.
- Continue advocating until change is made!

7. Contact Your Legislators

- <http://lrc.ky.gov/legislators.htm>
- Legislative Message Line: 1-800-372-7181
- Bill Status Line: 1-866-840-2835
- Meeting Line: 1-800-633-9650

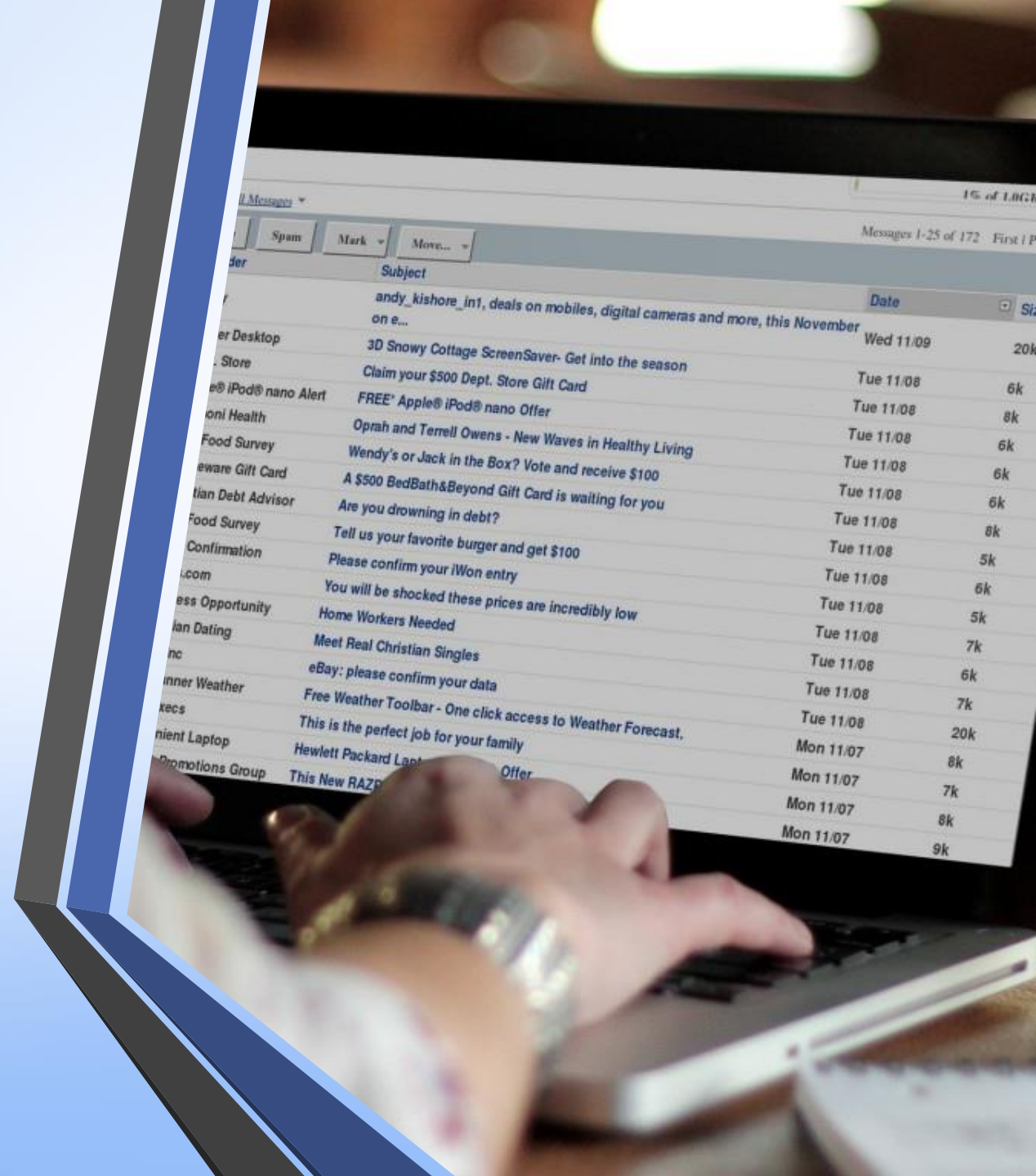


Writing Letters & E-Mail Tips

- Senators and Representative pay attention to their mail (both regular and e-mail). It's good politics.
- Responding to constituents is crucial to re-election. Members know your vote can be won or lost by their responses.
- Due to security issues, letters sent by U.S. mail are delayed. It is best to contact your U.S. Senator or Representative by email, phone or fax.
- The most effective letter is a personal one, not a form letter. The letter should be concise, informed and polite.

Contents of Your Letter or E-Mail

- Identify yourself as living in your legislator's district.
- Try to keep your letter to one page or two pages at most. Don't write on the back of a page and write legibly.
- State your purpose in a short introductory paragraph. If the subject is a bill, cite the bill number and name. Cover only one issue or subject in the letter.
- Be factual and explain how the legislation will affect you, your family and others. Avoid emotion.
- If you believe the legislation should be opposed, say so. Give an example of how it may be harmful and suggest a different approach.



When Writing a Letter or E-Mail

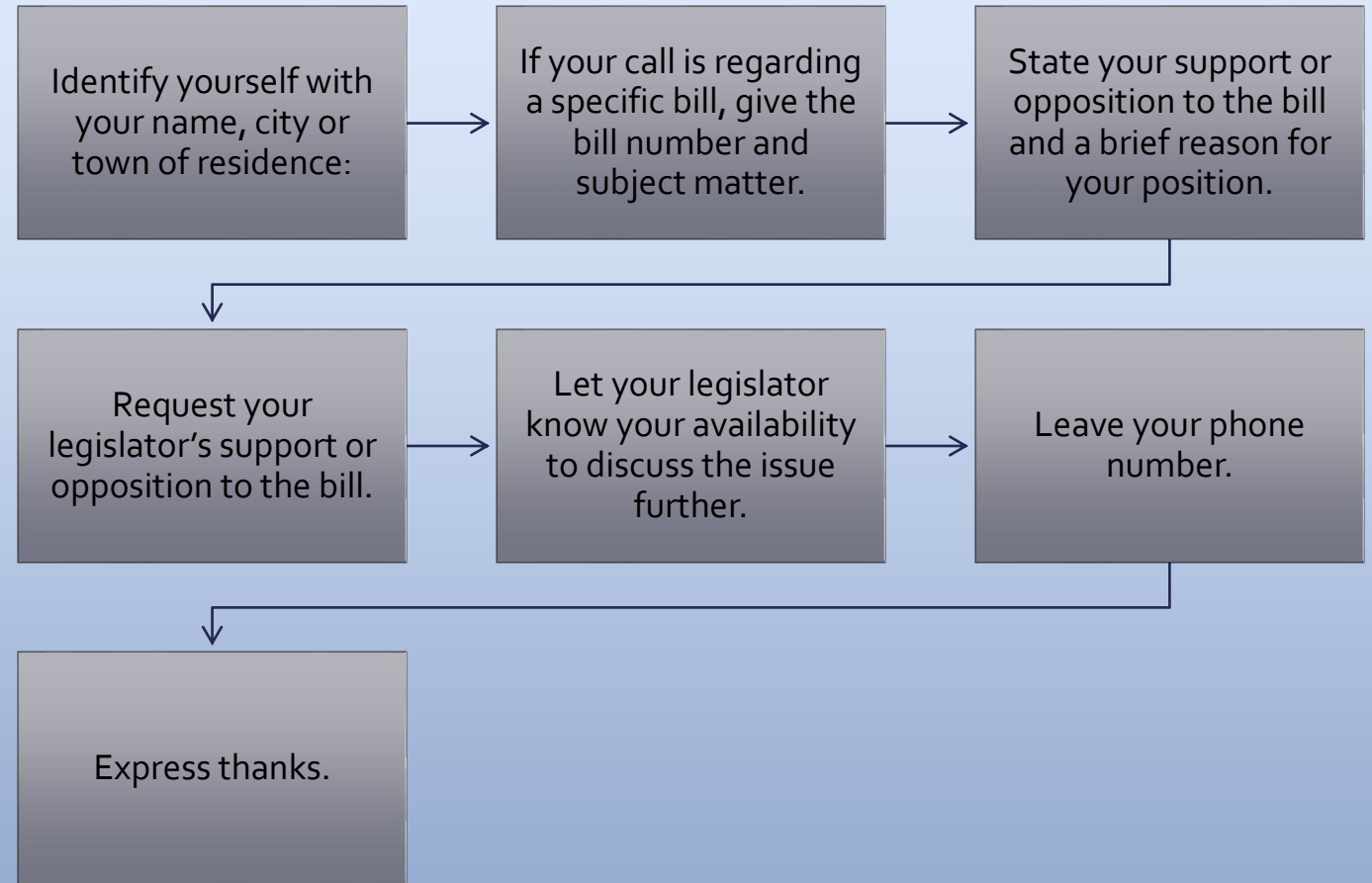
- Make sure your name and address are legible.
- In an e-mail, make sure your name, e-mail address, mailing address and phone number are all included.
- When writing a letter, instead of "Mr." or "Ms." Use:
- Dear Senator or Representative _____
- Address
- City, State, Zip Code
- Begin e-mail with:
- Dear Senator _____ or
- Dear Representative _____

Telephone calls should:

- Convey a meaningful message with helpful information.
- Be made in a timely manner.
- Be brief and to the point.
- Always be polite and leave a message if no one is unavailable.



When you call:





Any Questions?

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