

Developing an Effective Message



Answer these five questions to develop a message that is succinct, clear, and compelling.

1. Who are you?

- Name and address
- Do you live in the legislator's district? Are you a constituent?
- Are you affiliated with an organization? Briefly describe it (regional, state, national, etc.)

2. What issues are you most concerned about?

- Be prepared to describe your issue and don't be surprised if your legislator is unfamiliar with it.
- Explain your issue briefly and plainly (no more than two sentences) - don't bombard them initially with the details.

3. Why is this issue important to you?

- Make a compelling argument from your point of view

4. Why should this issue be important to your legislator?

- Describe how this issue will affect his/her constituents.
- Does his/her committee deal with these types of issues?

5. What action would you like the legislator to take?

- Always have a clear call to action.
- Always ask for a follow-up or response.
- Be specific in your request— don't ask for a “yes” or “no” response. Ask that they help get a bill heard in committee or brought up for a vote.
- Sometimes the best action is to keep dialogue open. Ask if they would be willing to read supporting materials and receive a follow-up phone call from you.

Additional tips:

- Try to leave something in writing with the legislator.
- Ask if the legislator would like more information or what you can do to gain their support.
- Be sure to follow-up in a timely manner.