



Contact Your Legislators

You can talk to your legislators in **many different ways**:

- Meet with legislators or their staff in Raleigh
- Meet with legislators back home in the district as an individual or get a group of folks together
- Make a phone call
- Write a letter or send an email

*Don't know who
your legislator is? Visit
[www.ncleg.net/representation/
/WhoRepresentsMe.aspx](http://www.ncleg.net/representation/WhoRepresentsMe.aspx)
to find out!*

Visiting a legislator's office in Raleigh:

Legislators are inundated with people who may or may not be the legislator's constituent, like paid lobbyists and people representing different organizations and groups. The legislator's schedule may vary quite a bit day to day, so call their office prior to your visit if possible and talk with their legislative assistant to determine when is a good time to meet – understand that this can change on short notice. You may be able to meet with them in their office or you may have to talk with them as they are on their way to a meeting. Regardless of the circumstances, legislators will try very hard to find the time to speak with you because you are a constituent. If you arrive for a meeting and the legislator is unavailable, be sure to talk with the legislative assistant as they will likely communicate your message to the legislator.

Meeting with legislators back home in the district:

Having a conversation with your legislator back in the district, away from the distractions and demands they have in Raleigh, is probably the best way to discuss your issues. Call your legislator's office to set up a time to meet (over a cup of coffee or in a public library, for example). Take advantage of events that are scheduled in the district to stay in touch with your legislators. Good times for this kind of meeting are in the months after or just before the legislative session. Tell them what you wished they would have done or what you'd like them to do in the next session. Bringing along three or four neighbors, friends or co-workers is a good way to show that other constituents are also concerned about the issue.

Calling a legislator:

A well-timed telephone call to your legislator is very effective, especially in relation to impending votes on specific legislation. Often the time between knowing when an issue is coming up for a vote and the actual vote is a matter of one or two days, so the Justice Center

will often send an email action alert with a request to phone your legislator about one of our legislative issues. However, you can call your legislator's office at any time on your own as well. You can look up your legislators' phone numbers at www.ncleg.net. When you call, ask to speak to the legislator. If he or she is not available, leave a message with their legislative assistant. Include the bill number and your position if you are seeking support or stating opposition to a particular bill. Because you are a constituent, be sure to leave your name and phone number when you speak to the legislator's staff person.

Writing or emailing a legislator:

The power of email is not what it once was, but it can still be an effective way to communicate quickly with your legislator about a specific piece of legislation. It is more powerful when a legislator receives hundreds of emails from constituents about a specific issue, so make sure to respond to Justice Center email action alerts with emails as well as phone calls, and share them with your friends! When it comes to writing a letter, this type of correspondence is often most helpful in describing an issue and the solution to address that issue, rather than an immediate request to support or oppose a specific bill. You can find your legislators' email and mailing addresses at www.ncleg.net. When writing a letter, address the letter in the following way:

The Honorable (legislator's name)
North Carolina (House of Representatives or Senate)
(Office Number and Building)
Raleigh, N.C. (zip code)

However you choose to speak up, be strategic:

- **Stay focused**, stick to one or two issues and keep it brief
- **Bring talking points** to help guide the conversation
- **You are a constituent**, and that's important, so be sure to tell them
- **Be specific about what you want your legislator to do:** Your call to action should be clear and direct. Cite the specific legislation or issue you want them to support or oppose
- **Let them know why you care:** How does this issue affect you and your community? Personal stories help illustrate why policies matter for real people
- **Follow up and say thank you:** Send a letter, email, or phone call thanking your legislator for their time and reminding them of your commitment to the issue(s), especially if they follow through on your request
- **Know where your legislators (and the Governor) stand:** Follow them on Facebook and twitter, sign up for their newsletters, look up the committees they're on, which bills they introduce and their votes at www.ncleg.net. Being informed about their stance helps you be more effective in your communication and lets them know you're paying attention.