

## Checklist for Telephone Calls

### Four Keys

- ☛ Be Brief. ☛ Be Timely.
- ☛ Rehearse. ☛ Be Prepared to leave a one-sentence message.

### Strategy

If you cannot say what you want to say within three minutes, write a letter.

### Dos and Don'ts

- Do make notes and practice what you want to say.
- Do identify yourself.
- Do use bill numbers if you have them.
- Do be prepared to leave a short message such as "Please support House File 100, the Hunger Reduction Bill."
- Don't insist on a call-back.
- Do make phone calls before key votes. Respond quickly to organizational "alerts."
- Don't rely solely on the phone. Get to know your legislator through visits and letters.
- Do report back to organizations on your phone conversations.

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## Legislative Information

Who are my legislators? How can I reach him or her?

Senate Information Office Room 231, State Capitol (651) 296-0504 (888) 234-1112 TTY(651) 296-0250 or (888) 234-1216	House Information Office 175 State Office Building (651) 296-2146 (800) 657-3550 TTY (651) 296-9896 or (800) 657-3550
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How can I find committee and floor session schedules?

Senate Schedule Hotline (651) 296-8088	House Schedule Hotline (651) 296-9283
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How can I track a certain piece of legislation?

Senate Index, (651) 296-2887	House Index, (651) 296-6646
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How can I receive free weekly summaries of the previous week's activity?

Call Senate Information above to receive *Senate Briefly*. Call House Information to receive *Session Weekly*.

ALL OF THE ABOVE AND MORE IS AVAILABLE ON THE MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE'S WEB SITE AT:  
[www.leg.state.mn.us](http://www.leg.state.mn.us)



## Tools for Faithful Citizenship

### How to Lobby and Shape Public Policy from Home



MINNESOTA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE  
MINNESOTA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES  
JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL

## General Lobbying Guide

### Two Keys

- ☛ Access - Your ability to talk to a legislator as someone you know.
- ☛ Credibility - Your believability on the subject you are talking about.

### Strategy

Gain Access; Protect Credibility - If you don't have access you can't gain credibility. If you lose credibility, you will lose access.

### Dos and Don'ts

- Do know your facts.
- Don't bluff. If you don't know, admit it and get back with the information later.
- Do be brief and to the point.
- Don't pressure, threaten or seek to intimidate.
- Do thank public officials and not just when you're asking for their support.
- Do leave something behind, such as a fact sheet or copy of a bill.
- Do get involved with campaigns, advisory boards, organizations.
- Don't underestimate your right to be heard.
- Do get to know your legislator.

### How to Lobby

Be yourself. Get to know your legislator. It may take time but begin now. Personal one-on-one relationships are the best.

Write letters. But keep them brief and to the point. Keep them to one subject and avoid form letters. Neat, handwritten letters are fine. Be sure to include your name and address on the letter itself...envelopes sometimes get tossed.

Use the telephone. But keep in mind it is sometimes hard to get legislators directly. Talk to your legislator's staff. They often have better command of details, facts.

Schedule meetings. Come prepared to discuss one issue and bring written information to leave behind. Keep the meeting short; just long enough to voice your concern.

Relax. Lobbying is a perfectly legitimate and vital right each of us has as a citizen. If you vote (and you should!), why not follow up and voice your concerns.

## Checklist for Writing a Letter

### Four Keys

- ☛ Be Brief.
- ☛ Be Legible.
- ☛ Be Polite.
- ☛ Be Timely.

### Strategy

Write the right legislator at the right time. You want your letter to reach a decision-maker right before he or she votes on the issue. Responding quickly to organizational "alerts" is crucial.

### Dos and Don'ts

- Do keep your letter to a single page and single subject.
- Do identify yourself. Make sure your name and address appear on the letter; envelope: get tossed. If you use letterhead, have a reason for doing so. If appropriate, cite your involvement or title with an organization.
- Do use bill numbers if you have them.
- Don't use form letters. Once you have the basic facts, write the letter in your own words.
- Do ask for a response. How will you vote? What is your opinion on this issue? What information do you need?
- Do send a copy of your letter and any response to your organization.
- Don't write after a vote. Your letter counts beforehand.
- Don't expect an immediate reply.

### How to Address the Letter

*Senator Jane Smith  
Minnesota State Senate  
St. Paul, MN 55155*

*Representative Bob Brown  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
St. Paul, MN 55155*

*Dear Senator Smith,*

*Dear Representative Brown,*