



Construct an Email Message to an Elected Official

Note: Legislators' staffs count these messages, pro and con. So, volume is important

We've Made It Easier – We'll Prepare the Message. You Just Click and Advocate

You may have seen that local television ad by that says “If you’ve got a phone, you’ve got a lawyer.” Well, if you’ve got a computer mouse button, you’re an advocate.

During the legislative session, Issue Advocate Leaders will compose messages encouraging legislators to act on certain bills. UULM-MD will send these action alerts to you to contact your legislators. These alerts

- may be part of the UULM-MD Weekly Digest; or
- they may be targeted to UU’s who live in certain legislative districts, for example, those UU’s who are represented by committee members; or
- sent to members of an Issue Advocacy Team; or
- sent to those who have signed up to receive alerts about specific priority issues.

The alert will contain some facts about the issue and a form-based message for you to send to your legislators. You can edit and personalize the message or send it as is. **Just click the SEND button.**

If you prefer to write your own message, here are some tips.

In the Subject Line, write: “Constituent, Support/Oppose HB123 or SB456.” If you are addressing a Committee or Committee Chair who is not your legislator, omit “Constituent” unless, of course, the Chairperson is your senator or delegate.

Keep your message short, not longer than one page, stick to one issue. Make it timely, for example,

- while the bill is under consideration in committee (if your legislator is on the committee); or
- when it is scheduled for a floor vote; or

- when there is an approaching deadline such as Crossover Date

Be sure to use the proper form of address and the correct spelling of the official's name.

Identify yourself as a constituent. Identify the organization you are part of or represent. If you are a public employee, make sure you state that you are writing as a constituent and private citizen (to avoid Hatch Act or other statutes and regulations). If you have relevant professional qualifications, state them.

Explain the purpose of your message early and whether you are pleased or concerned about it. Mention that you are seeking the official's support or opposition.

Personalize the message. Is there a personal story that you can relate about the issue? Explain how the bill or proposed regulation affects you or your community or others

The message may include information that the official may not have or suggest an alternative, particularly if you are opposed to the bill or regulation.

If you offer any supporting evidence, please make sure it is accurate.

Acknowledge any past support by the official which you may know about or from previous voting history on bills that you can get from the MGALEG website. Search for a bill and visit the History section.

Reiterate the action you hope the official will take on the issue and that you would like a reply.

Ask if there is any way you or your group can help.

Close the message. You may, for example, include your degrees with your signature.