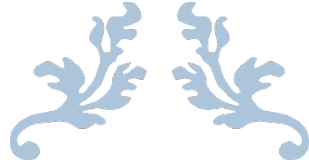




VOTING RIGHTS ADVOCATE TOOLKIT

Templates, Tips, and Other Tools

Nebraskans for Civic Reform



SAMPLE CONTACTS

Typed Letter, Email, and Voice Mail



Voice Mail

Sample:

This message is for Senator Lodivod. My name is Jojo Papel. I'm a lifelong resident of your district and am asking you to oppose LB 213, the Motorless Paper Aviation Act, in committee tomorrow. By allowing paper airplanes to be openly thrown in public we are encouraging damaging attitudes towards the environment and general tomfoolery. Paper Airplanes need to be stopped. Please oppose LB 213, the Motorless Paper Aviation Act. Thank you and have a great day.

Comment [PC1]: Voicemails should be quick and to the point around 20-50 seconds long.

Voicemails imply urgency.

Always write out a script before leaving a voicemail to keep your thoughts organized.

Email

Example:

Subject Line: Support LB 999, Senator Cena!

Senator Cena,

Hello, my name is Bart Simpson and I am a Hand Model with Hand Models are Us in Fremont. I recently contacted my representative, Senator Thompson in support of LB 999, the Safe and Fair Modeling Act. Because the bill is before Judiciary Committee, I also want to encourage Senator Cena to support LB 999.

Nebraska's most vulnerable hand models can't afford to have unsafe hand modeling conditions. Just recently my coworker and I both were expected to work with hangnails on our fingers. These conditions are unacceptable.

I am asking Senator Cena to support LB 999 and encourage members of the Judiciary Committee to vote YES on this critical issue so that it can be considered by the full legislature. How does Senator Cena plan to vote on this important issue? Thank you for your time and for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Bart Simpson
Bart.Simp@handmodels4eva.org
402-555-9292

Typed Letter

Example:

The Honorable Senator Pterodactyl,
1445 K Street,
#3246
Lincoln, NE 68508

January 12, 150000 BC

Tyrannosaurus Roxy

Comment [PC2]: The subject line should clearly state whether you oppose or support and the specific bill number you are opposing or supporting. Make sure the subject line is less than 40 characters, that's how many are seen on a mobile device.

Comment [PC3]: Greetings in emails are less formal than letters. However always address a senator as Senator.

Comment [PC4]: The first sentence of your email should state your constituency even if you are not contacting your own Senator.

Comment [PC5]: The next 1-2 sentences should state your stance and why.

Comment [PC6]: The next paragraph can provide more support for your position, whether that be data and info or a personal story. This is just an opportunity to express your position

Comment [PC7]: Close with a brief sentence summarizing your position

Comment [PC8]: Sign the email with a closing salutation and your first and last name.

Comment [PC9]: Provide contact info. A senator or their staff will most likely respond through the same medium you contacted them.

Comment [PC10]: Typed Letters are more formal than emails and handwritten letters.

Always use a text book font size of 10 or greater.

1224 E Main Street,
Bruno, NE 68014
RoxyRex@TRexHistoricalSocietyofAmerica.org
402-555-1747

To the Honorable Senator Pterodactyl,

I'm a dedicated single mom and founder of the Tyrannosaurus Rex Historical Society from Senator Leoplardon's district. I'm writing you to ask for support on LB 003, the Restore Fossil Beds Act, because it will be seen in front of the Appropriations Committee. This issue is important to me because with restored fossil beds we could bring more tourism to central Nebraska, it would help educate children on the unique culture of the T Rex, and it will preserve an important piece of geological history.

As a business owner, I value dinosaurs (and people) from all across the world coming to visit our great state and our local businesses. The restoration of this grand natural attraction would allow our communities to thrive and become a major tourism destination. This attraction would also be family friendly which would allow even more people to visit our humble region.

In addition to being a tourist attraction, it would serve as a way for local kids to learn about the dinosaurs that lived here long ago. As a mother, I want as many educational opportunities as possible for my kids. With the funds from this act, an interactive children's exhibit will be added to this area. I'm excited for the potential the Restore Fossil Beds act would mean for my family.

Also, the tyrannosaurus Rex culture is so rarely preserved that we will be able to investigate some intriguing questions: why did they live by themselves?, how are they able to eat meat?, do they have words like us?. There is just so much to learn. I'm sure the area universities would love to have this in easy access to them as well.

All in all, LB 003, the Restore Fossil Beds Act will better my family through a new interactive children's exhibit. My professional life is improved because I would have access to nearby cultural artifacts to the illusive Tyrannosaurs Rex. Of course my community benefits by the expected increases in tourism.

I urge Senator Pterodactyl to support the Restore Fossil Beds Act. I look forward to her reply.
Sincerely,

Tyrannosaurus Roxy

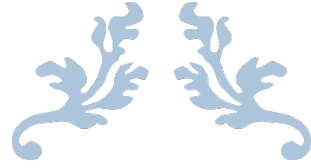
Comment [PC11]: Keep the whole document, including addresses under one page.

Comment [PC12]: Be sure the specific bill you are addressing is mentioned in the introductory paragraph.

Comment [PC13]: The body of the bill should relate to the bill and its relation to you.

Comment [PC14]: Closing paragraph should simplify all points mentioned earlier in the letter.

Comment [PC15]: End with what you would like the senator to do (support, oppose, provide information)



TEMPLATES

Typed Letters, Email, Voice Mail



Email:

Subject: Oppose/Support LB XXXX!

Senator (Last Name),

I am a resident of (City/Town/Village) in legislative district XX. I support/oppose LB XXXX because (reason 1), (reason 2), and (reason 3).

(Spend about 2-4 sentences elaborating on your reasons)

(If applicable add this third paragraph to provide additional support for your reasons or personal experience with the issue.)

Sincerely,

(Your First and Last Name)

(Your Contact Info)

Voice Mail:

This message is for Senator (Last Name). (introduce yourself and constituency) (State what you are supporting/opposing) (Provide a few quick reasons why) (reiterate your position) (Thank the senator for your time)

Typed Letter:

Senator (First) (Last)
District ##, State Capitol
PO Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509

(Date)

(Your First and Last Name)

(Your Address)

(City, State, Zip Code)

(Other Contact Info)

To the Honorable Senator (Last Name),

I live and work in Legislative District XX. (Feel free to add another sentence to further introduce yourself ie your occupation, involvement with the issue or community affected, etc.) I support/oppose LB XXXX and encourage you to support/oppose as well. This is because (reason 1), (reason 2), and (reason 3).

(Enter 2-3 paragraphs about 3-5 sentences long going into detail of your support. This could be professional expertise, personal story, or talking points that resonate with you.)

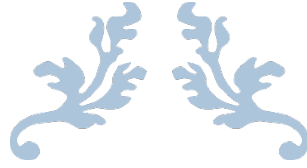
(Short Paragraph concluding your thoughts around 2-5 sentences)

(End with an “ask” paragraph around 2-3 sentences. This paragraph you ask for support or opposition or their stance on the issue.)

Sincerely,

(Signed Signature)

(First and Last Name)



TIPS AND OTHER TOOLS

Handwritten Letters, Meeting with Senators, Legislative Process Diagram, and the five key Legislative Tips



Handwritten Letter:

Handwritten letters follow a similar format to an email.

Handwritten letters are shorter than Typed letters.

Handwritten letters are one of the most personal ways to contact a senator so a personal story is powerful in this medium.

Keep a handwritten letter less than one page.

Tips for Phone Calls and Meeting in Person

Always be sure to introduce your constituency, position on a bill, and what you would like the senator to do.

Before calling or meeting with a senator familiarize yourself with the talking points of the issue.

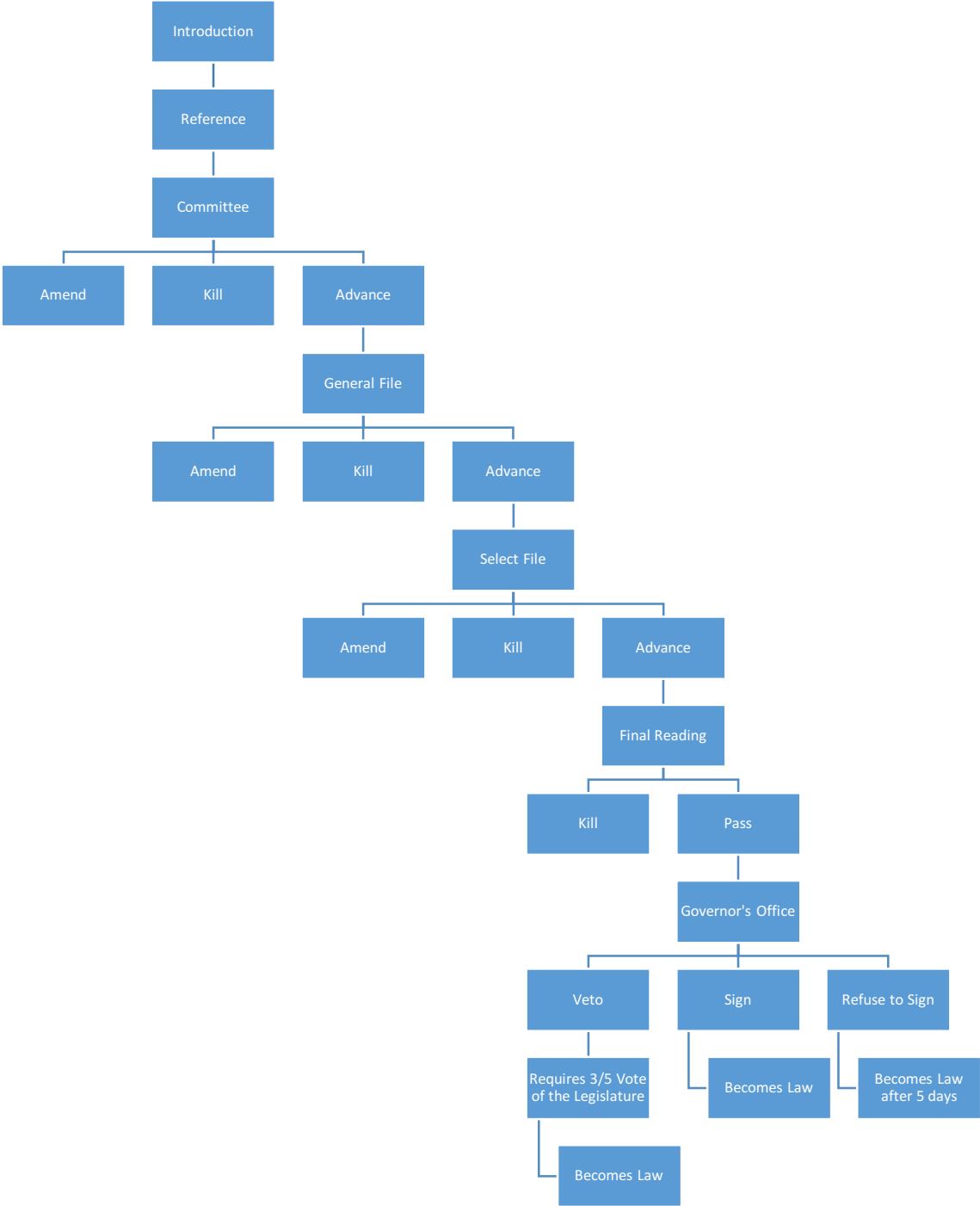
When meeting in person, be sure to dress in business dress.

If you don't know the answer to a senator's question, it is ok to say you don't know and will follow up with them. If you say this please actually follow up with them. :)

Five Facts of The Legislature

1. **Every bill gets a hearing.** Bills must be introduced in the first ten days of session. After a bill is introduced, it is assigned to the committee that deals with similar issues. A hearing is scheduled and every Nebraskan has the opportunity to testify before the committee about the bill.
2. **Three types of committee testimony.** Individuals testifying before a committee on a bill can testify either (1) in support of the bill, (2) in opposition to the bill, (3) neutral on the bill.
3. **Needs to be voted out of committee.** Before a bill can be debated by the full Legislature, the committee must vote it out. This takes a majority of committee members.
4. **Three rounds of debate.** After a bill is voted out of committee, it is debated on General File for the first round of debate. Most bills only need 25 votes in favor to advance to the 2nd round of debate, Select File. The last round of debate is Final Reading where the bill is read into the record and senators vote on whether to send the bill to the governor.
5. **The Governor can veto a bill.** If the Governor vetoes a bill, a senator, usually the senator that introduced the bill, may make a motion to override the Governor's veto. To override a veto requires 30 votes.

Legislative Process:



Other Links:

Senator Look Up: http://nebraskalegislature.gov/senators/senator_find.php

Bill Tracker: <http://www.nebraska.gov/billtracker/>

Senator Web Pages: http://nebraskalegislature.gov/senators/senator_list.php

Legislative District Maps: http://nebraskalegislature.gov/about/leg_map.php

Frequently Asked Legislature Questions: <http://nebraskalegislature.gov/faq/faq.php>

NCR Voting Rights Website: <http://nereform.org/know-your-rights/voting-rights-advocates/>

Voting Rights Advocate Form: <https://goo.gl/forms/maLQXtvBAyq2QzpI3>