Guidelines and tips for contacting your elected officials

*Letters are an extremely effective way of communicating with your elected officials. Many legislators believe that a letter represents not only the position of the writer but also many other constituents who did not take the time to write. Here are some tips from Nebraska State Senator Adam Morfeld and the ACLU.*

Keep your letter or email short - just a few paragraphs.

State your name and your address to quickly identify yourself as a constituent.

Succinctly state what you want the elected official to do. e.g. “I would like you to vote in favor of LB XXX and tell me your stance on this bill.” You can search for bills in the Nebraska Unicameral by [clicking here](https://nebraskalegislature.gov/), United States Congressional bills by clicking [here](https://www.senate.gov/legislative/legislative_home.htm) and  [here](https://www.house.gov/)

Do not just ask them to vote for something. Ask them for their position on the issue or legislation. Hit your three most important points. Choose the three strongest points that will be most effective in persuading the legislator to support your position.

Give the reason that this will positively or negatively impact you. Tell the official why this legislation matters in the community or state. If you have one, include a personal story that shows how this issue affects you and your family. A constituent's personal stories can be the very persuasive as your legislator shapes his or her position.

Personalize your relationship: have you ever voted for this elected official? Have you ever contributed time or money to his or her campaign? Are you familiar with her through any business or personal relationship? If so, tell your elected official or his staff person. The closer your legislator feels to you, the more powerful your argument is likely to be.

And remember, you are the expert:  your legislator's job is to represent you. You should be courteous and to the point, but don't be afraid to take a firm position. Remember that often your elected official may know no more about a given issue than you do.

Do not use name-calling, don’t make assumptions about them or their position, and don’t use politically charged rhetoric.

Restate in your last sentence what you would like them to do and that you would like a response as to their position on the issue.

Thank them for their service.

Do not do use form emails or automated ones. They are not effective.

Nebraska Unicameral Senators contact information [click here](https://nebraskalegislature.gov/senators/senator_find.php)

US Senators contact information [click here](https://www.senate.gov/senators/)

US House of Representatives [click here](https://www.house.gov/representatives)