

Tips for Contacting Your Legislators in Springfield

Illinois legislators were elected to represent you, their constituent. It's YOUR opinion that matters the most, so do not hesitate to let them know where you stand on industry issues.

Establishing a Relationship

Meet with legislators in their home district. They will be less likely to be bombarded by the hundreds of other issues that come through their doors and phones in Springfield.

Call your district and set up a 'get to know you' meeting for lunch, for coffee.

Discuss the more general issues affecting your industry. Tell them how these issues affect your business. Once you have established a relationship, they will be more likely to take your calls and recognize your name when you send them a letter.

Invite your legislator to attend industry events in the district. Schedules are tight for most legislators, but they appreciate the opportunity to meet their constituents in group settings.

It gives them an opportunity to get to know you, the industry, AND the issues you face every day.

Take your legislator to visit a worksite to meet your employees. This provides your legislator with a good one-on-one experience and gives them a first-hand impression of the work you and those who work with you do.

Plus legislators always need good photo opportunities for upcoming newsletters and mailings — be sure to have a camera on hand!

Attend events held by your legislators. Get a foursome together and attend your legislators' golf outings. Take the time to visit with them at dinner, receptions, or fundraisers. Let them know that you value the work they do in Springfield.

Forms of Communication

If time allows, letters — mailed or faxed — provide a very effective means of communication. Letters have good visual impact and demonstrate that the issue is important enough to warrant the



effort of drafting a letter.

If more immediate action is needed, an e-mail or personal phone call to their Springfield office is an effective tool.

Tips on the Approach

Legislators are busy, so be concise and to the point. Know the bill number for the issue you are addressing, and its status in the process.

If you are not sure, call ICIC at 217-528-3434, and we can look it up. You can also monitor legislation on the General Assembly web site at www.legis.state.il.us.

Include facts, figures and statistics. Members like to have numbers to support their positions — such as:

- ✓ *What will it cost the industry?*
 - ✓ *How many other states have these laws?*
 - ✓ *How will it impact interstate competition?*
- Be specific on how the bill or issue affects you and your business.
- ✓ *How will it impact expenses?*
 - ✓ *Will you have to lay off any employees?*
 - ✓ *Will it allow you to expand your business?*

Be careful. Your legislators may not share your, or the industry's view, on a particular issue.

Just state your case clearly — regardless of their ultimate position.

Then thank them for their time.

Remember, you are the most effective lobbyist this industry has.

Be sure to make your voice heard!