

## A guide to communications with your legislators

Getting a message to the correct individual legislator or legislators during session requires a bit of effort. The steps are straight forward but getting success the first time out may be a bit frustrating. This guide is intended to help you complete a few steps that will bring success.

Step 1 is to find the bill or bills you want to send a message about.

- a. Go to [www.access.wa.gov](http://www.access.wa.gov) to get to the State web site home page. (you should probably save this site in your "favorites" file because it allows access to all state government materials.
- b. On the tool bar select and click on [Government](#)
- c. On the page that comes up select and click on [state legislature](#)
- d. On the next page select and click on [state legislature](#)
- e. You are now on the State Legislature Home Page (this is a good one to save in favorites also)
- f. On the left column find and click on [Bill Information](#)
- g. The Bill Information page allows a number of options
  - If you know the number of the Bill or the subject matter you can use the search feature
  - If you are interested in tracking bills in general you should click on [Daily Status Report](#). When the Status page comes up you will see all bills before the legislature in numeric order with the Senate Bills and actions listed first. If you are using the Status page you will want a copy of the KEY that explains about bills. You get the KEY by clicking on the word "Key" directly under the column title "Notes". You will want to print and save the key. If you are using the Status page, you can open the information on any bill by selecting and clicking on the [Bill Number](#)
- h. Once you have the bill you desire on screen you will need to collect some information for later use.
  - a. The proper title of the Bill
  - b. The bill Sponsor(s)
  - c. Session action will tell you which committee is hearing the bill and generally what the status of the bill is.
  - d. Bill reports are a synopsis of the Bill created by staff (the same people who wrote the bill) and you probably do not want to place too much faith in that review. It is the staff report to the committee and will almost always be very favorable toward adoption as written if it is a majority sponsored bill.
  - e. Bill Documents will allow you to download a complete copy of the Bill. Use the latest iteration of the Bill to understand what the Committee is working on.
- i. Download the information that you require to prepare your comments. A note of caution in this effort. Most of the Bills will refer to other existing laws that they are revising. If you do not have a copy of the law(s) being referenced and revised you may have a hard time understanding all of the

particulars of the bill. You can still get a satisfactory understanding by reading the opening “intent” or purpose paragraphs and then looking at the specific changes being recommended and considered. You will probably be able to make a reasonable set of comments on why you support or do not support the legislation without complete understanding of the entire impact.

- j. If you find you need help with understanding the bill you are trying to comment on, try contacting a member of the KAPO lunatic fringe who study that stuff for entertainment and light reading.
- k. Once you have the Bill in hand and your comments ready to commit to paper, please use something like the following format:

*“Honorable Senator/Representative,*

*I write concerning HB1XXX relating to pigmy liberals and to express my strongest opposition (or strongest support for the bill.*

*Make your argument in a paragraph or two at the most*

*I most strongly recommend that HB1XXX be processed with a “Do Not Pass” recommendation from committee and that it not be adopted by the Senate/House.*

*Thanks you for your consideration*

*I.B. Complaining  
Somewhere, WA”*

Step 2 is to identify the legislator you want to send your message to

- a. In step 1.h.c you identified the Committee that is handling the Bill
- b. Return to the State Legislature Page (step 1.d – now you know why I told you to save it to “favorites”)
- c. Select and click on [Legislative Committees](#)
- d. The Committees page will allow you to further identify Senate and house committees. You should select each and either print out the committee list or save the file in your “documents” file for later reference and use.
- e. From the proper committee list, identify the committee handling the bill you are working with and identify the individual members. Now you are ready to get address information and write your email

Step 3 preparing to address an email

- a. Return again to the [Legislative Committees](#) page and click on [Find your Legislator](#)

- b. On the [Find your Legislator](#) page under [Rosters](#) click on [House and Senate](#)
- c. On the House and Senate page select under Members first the House and then the Senate. This will give you a complete list of all serving legislators and their email addresses. Download and save these files in your documents. You will need them to effectively send emails.

Step 4 addressing the email

- a. With the “committee” list in hand and the Senate or House roster list on your screen, open your email and select the new message option to prepare an email.
- b. From the committee list identify each member in order, go to the onscreen Roster copy the email address and paste it to the email form.
- c. Repeat the step for each member.
- d. If you want your district legislators to know about your concerns, add them as copy to

Step 5 – add the message and finish with your name and city/town and send the message.

I have included the lists of committees and rosters with this message. If you have difficulty using the attached lists, follow the instructions on the sheet and download your own lists.

You may also get legislation information from the [www.washingtonvotes.com](http://www.washingtonvotes.com) web site but you will probably need to become familiar with [www.access.wa.gov](http://www.access.wa.gov) sooner or later. Which ever way you approach the process remember to save sites that are critical to this effort to your “Favorites” and to save critical lists to your document file for future reference.

Have a ball!