Communicate Your Views | CPD

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What is the best way to communicate your views to policymakers? Should you call, testify in person, e-mail, visit, or write to them?

Policymakers pay attention when citizens take the time to call and convey their views. Call just before upcoming votes in committee, on the floor, or late in the session. Avoid calling on Sunday or on Monday evenings. Letters are good before the session. E-mail is best during the session (use the subject line to indicate that you are a constituent.

Personal visits can make a big difference if you have the time. If you’re planning a personal visit, call ahead and make an appointment. Be on time. Be brief (10-15 minutes). Respect their schedules. Take a one-page outline or fact sheet to remind them about your visit and concerns.

The following guidelines are helpful no matter which form of communication you choose.

--Always identify yourself by name and address. Perhaps the most important thing you can say about yourself is “I am a voter in your district.”

--Be brief, informed, and polite.

--Identify the issue, budget item or bill you want to talk about. Don’t assume they know about it—they have so much to deal with!

--State your purpose for calling and what your position is. Give one or more reasons for your position. It is almost always a good idea to speak from personal experience.

--Tell your own story.

--Always thank them for their time.

Utah residents can find out the names and contact information for their legislators by visiting http://le.utah.gov.