

Legislative Action Techniques

Priority for contacts

1. Email
2. Phone call
3. Letter

Writing (letter or email)

- At the top of your letter (or in the subject line of your email), write the bill number, specifying support or opposition. Limit yourself to writing about only one bill.
- State that you are a state retiree and a member of NCRSP.
- If you are a constituent of that particular legislator, say so.
- Don't use a form letter/email—it will most likely be disregarded.
- State your position clearly and on one page. (*Email hint:* Print your email to check this before you send it.)
- Be courteous and explain your reasoning clearly—ranting or demanding won't get you anywhere.
- Check your facts—even a few errors will diminish your credibility and your impact.
- *If using email*, keep your language and grammar formal, just as if you were writing a letter.
- Always include your full name, mailing address, and telephone number (even in emails).

When and to whom you should write:

- As soon as the bill is assigned to a committee, write to that committee chair and all of the members on that committee.
- Write your own legislators.
- In some cases, write to the Governor, Speaker of the House, and Senate President Pro Tempore.
- After an affirmative vote, write and thank the legislators, and if the vote is against your position, write and ask why.

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Telephoning

- Call your own legislators.
- State your name, that you're a state retiree, and that you're a member of NCRSP.
- State that you are a constituent.
- Say that you are in favor of Bill #(?) or that you oppose Bill #(?).
- Ask that your call be registered and reported to the legislator.

In-person

- Make an appointment in advance.
- If possible, take a friend with you.
- Be on time.
- Have a copy of the bill or at least a summary including the bill number.
- Know your facts and be brief.
- Ask the legislator's viewpoint.
- If asked questions which you cannot answer, say that you will get the information back to him or her, then call your local unit's legislative chair and follow through.
- Leave printed material with the legislator.
- Talk with a staff person if the legislator is unavailable.
- Be courteous but firm.
- Do not react negatively to a legislator that is unsympathetic to your cause.
- Ask your local unit Legislative Chair to provide a list all legislators in your area, with names, addresses and phone numbers (these can be distributed at meetings).
- **Focus on retiree issues only.**

Compiled from various sources