

Using E-mail

[Adapted from an article by Kara Joy McKee, *Together Oklahoma*, April 18th, 2016]

E-mail can be an easy and effective tool for communicating with legislators. The tips for writing letters to legislators also apply to e-mails: keep them brief and to the point, with facts and anecdotes relevant to the legislator's district.

Avoid informal language — E-mail to a legislator should be treated as seriously as a written letter. Resist the temptation to use the informal language and symbols often associated with e-mail communications. Never use impolite language or make “demands”; instead, you can “urge”, “encourage”, or simply “ask” for their support on your issue. Legislators are much more likely to hear us when we express our needs clearly.

Include your full address and zip code — Make sure the text of your e-mail includes your full name and street address, including zip code. Many legislative offices screen e-mails for address information identifying the sender as a constituent. E-mails that appear to come from outside the district are unlikely to be read and may be blocked by filtering programs.

Example letter/email

Dear (Representative _____ / Senator _____),

Thank you for your time. I am your constituent, I voted for you (or I will be voting), and I appreciate that you (_____ something they did that you like _____).

I am writing to you today because I'd like to ask you to (specific ask such as Vote YAY/ Vote NAY for ____ (bill number) ____ that would ____ (bill description) ____ because it would ____ .)

Please write back to me or you can call me at _____ to let me know I can count on you to do ____ on this issue.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Your constituent,

(your name)

(your address)

You can influence legislators' views

Remember, handwritten letters and personalized emails can show time and consideration. When you write to tell them who you are, why you appreciate them, what is important to you, what you want them to do, and how you are going to follow

up, you are making a clear statement that you understand that their job is important to what happens in your daily life. State legislators will often respond to your letter, and even if they don't agree with you, they take note of how many people, especially constituents, write to them expressing opinions about each issue. Keep track of your correspondence with them the same way you keep track of the way they vote so you can **HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE!**