

How to Contact Your Legislator – Dos and Don'ts

As a District Captain you have two primary goals. You are essentially a mini State Director for your assigned district and have the responsibility of:

- **Developing a relationship with your legislators**
- **Recruiting, activating, training and motivating the volunteers in your district to become part of a strong volunteer army.**

There are many tools and resources to accomplish the second goal, but for most the prospect of personally meeting with and talking with their legislators is a new experience and somewhat frightening. Presented here is a guide to help you build that relationship. As you learn the process, bring along your volunteers and teach them to do the same.

Contacting Your Legislator:

- 1. Emails: The least effective way to build a relationship with your legislator is thru emails. They very seldom answer personally, but mostly thru from letters and automated responses based on your subject.**
- 2. The phone call:**
 - a. You will probably talk to a legislative aid. Get the aid's name and address them by name, provide your info/subject, tell the aid you are a constituent and would like this info passed to the legislator.**
 - b. Have a few bullet points ready**
 - i. That you support Convention of States (COS)**
 - ii. You are seeking the legislators support**
 - iii. Why you are a supporter of COS**
 - c. Your tone and voice should be firm, concise and confident (practice)**
 - d. If the aid says they have never heard of COS, you have an open door to ask for an appointment with the legislator for a one-on-one.**
 - e. Make a log of your phone calls – date, who and result and record on Patriot Games website or LMS. (PG is the easiest)**
 - f. Calling once is not enough. The aid and legislator need to get to know you. Multiple contacts are needed to build the relationship.**
- 3. The Actual Meeting:**
 - a. Try to meet at their local office. If you try to get an appointment in Richmond during legislative session you will most likely not see the legislator.**

- b. Dress business casual – no bumper sticker tee-shirt. You want to show respect for the office and establish credibility. (even if you don't like your legislator)**
- c. Come armed with facts, leave emotion out of it. You are not there to win them over, but to offer facts and ask questions.**
- d. Example – ask them on a scale of 1-10, 10 being most supportive, where would they fall? If they are a 2, ask what would move them to a 4, or visa-versa if they are a 4 what would cause them to move to a 2. This make them think about their answer.**
- e. You don't have to be a constitutional scholar, just understand Article V and the process and be able to answer the most common objections.**
- f. Your message from the 1st meeting should be that you are building a relationship. Your goal and mind set are to remember sales rules. People are more likely to agree/buy from someone they know, like and trust.**
- g. Remember that you can never make a second “first” impression. So, respect their time, show up on time, stand face to face, look them in the eye, give them a firm handshake and thank for their time. Let them know that you have and want to discuss the solution to the nation's problems.**

4. The Handwritten Letter:

- a. While a handwritten letter is not as effective as face to face, there is a time for one. If a legislator gives you more than 15 minutes of their time, you owe them a written thank you note. Write in blue ink.**
- b. A handwritten letter shows that you truly appreciate the time they spent with you and you were serious about your concerns and not just crossing an item off a to-do list.**

Conclusions:

Any meeting, phone contact, or conversation with a legislator is an opportunity to build a relationship. Always be respectful and kind. Treat them the way you would like to be treated. Never do or say something in a way that is offensive or emotional. This will turn them off immediately to your message. You may not get a second chance. Visiting them once won't cut it. This process takes tenacity and perseverance. NEVER GIVE UP. You never know, the next time might be the breakthrough moment.

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