

How to Communicate with Elected Leaders

- IDENTIFY YOUR LEADER**

Use websites provided by your Secretary of State like www.michigan.gov/vote to type in your personalized information. This can aide you in identifying your specific leaders for each district.
- BE FRIENDLY AND GRACIOUS**

You are not their only constituent. Be winsome, and warm. Make it a pleasure to communicate with you so they will be eager to do it again in the future. Also be kind to their gatekeepers or staff. They are often the ones who can be of even greater help!
- ASK SUCCINCT QUESTIONS**

Start with the most important issues you want to present to them: perhaps items under a deadline? Make it your goal to have such a great encounter that you are welcomed back to bring up additional points. To put all the topics on them at once can be overwhelming.
- MAKE YOUR POINT**

Be clear about what it is you want to say to them and - with tact and respect - say it. Do not go in throwing 100 questions at them, putting them on the defensive. Go into the time with them assuming the best and they will feel more free to listen and to share. It is sometimes helpful to let them know ahead of time what you wish to discuss.
- PROVIDE CONTACT INFORMATION**

Make it easy for them to get ahold of you and to follow up. Also remember to understand how you can get in touch with them again. It is a good idea to carry business cards and to always ask for theirs in return.
- GIVE TIME FOR RESPONSE**

You are not their only constituent. While your issue may be urgent to you, understand they may also be juggling a few other urgent topics. Ask questions like, "Do you know when I might look for a response from you?" If, after a few days, you have not heard anything you can always follow up with questions like, "I just wanted to check in on our discussion. Were you able to learn anything?"
- DO GRACIOUS FOLLOW UP**

It is good for our attitudes and the person we are asking if we pitch our follow up like this, "I hope I did not miss your email. I realize these things get stuck in spam at times! Did you send me anything yet?" Or "I have been gone for a week on vacation and I hope I didn't miss your attempt to follow up with me." Give them grace.
- TRY A DIFFERENT MEDIUM**

Assume the best before you assume the worst. If you did not reach them via phone, try messaging them on social media, or sending them a friendly email. Maybe that is a better mode of communication for them!



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Amy has had a passion for good communications for over 20 years. And she too continues to love the learning journey! Email her with questions and explore all the resources she has available!