



## CONTACTING YOUR LEGISLATOR

([HTTP://WWW.IN.GOV](http://www.in.gov)) This is the official website of the State of Indiana that contains a wealth of information on our Indiana government. Upon visiting this website, click on the “Government” tab followed by the “General Assembly” tab. You will find links to your legislator’s own webpage and e-mail address. It is as simple as entering your address and zip code. In addition, you will find information on current legislation including the status of bills, the schedule of meetings, the House and Senate calendars and much more. If you are not currently connected to the Internet, many libraries offer computer services and assistance in using them.

From time to time, important legislation takes place on issues involving families. Contacting your legislator to express your feelings on the issue becomes necessary. Effective ways to contact your legislators are by e-mail, by letter or by a phone call. Of these methods, e-mail is the most effective. All government officials receive a desktop computer from the State of Indiana and can be reached via e-mail. This also offers an opportunity for a quick response. To obtain your legislators e-mail address, you can visit the website for the list of current legislators.

([iga.in.gov/legislative/find-legislators/](http://iga.in.gov/legislative/find-legislators/))

### **HOW TO PROCEED**

In all forms of effective communicating, it is important that you are polite, accurate and concise. Use your own words and stick to one topic or bill.

When calling: Remember that you might not get to speak directly to your legislator but rather to a representative of that person.

1. Give your name, address or town, phone number and organization, if any.
2. Have the bill number ready and be prepared to brief the legislator on the contents to remind them of the topic.
3. Explain your position calmly, without argument, and what action you would like your legislator to take. Keep your call short and to the point.
4. You may wish to ask for a written response from the legislator.
5. Thank the legislator (or the person who took the message) for his or her time.  
Example: “Hello, Representative Smith, my name is April Day, and I am calling on behalf of the Extension Homemakers of Huntington County. I am from

Roanoke and my home phone number is 260-356-5555. I am calling to ask you to vote for S.B. #96, the Early Childhood Education bill, when it comes up this week. We believe that offering educational opportunities to young children allows them better learning opportunities as they enter elementary school and throughout their life-long learning process. Early exposure to learning opportunities will help them to become more knowledgeable and well-informed future citizens. Thank you for your time today.”

6. Keep records of all communications with your legislator including date, time, topic and to whom you spoke.

Legislative phone numbers:

Indianapolis area: 317-232-9400 to reach the Senate Telephone Center.

317-232-9600 to reach the House Telephone Center.

Outside of the area: 1-800-382-9467 to reach the Senate phone center.

1-800-382-9842 to reach the House phone center.

When writing:

1. Make the letter your own. Use your own words. Form letters are quickly recognized and discounted as one opinion.
2. Limit each writing to a single topic or bill.
3. Include the bill number and a brief description of the subject matter.
4. The proper way to address your legislator is as follows:

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
Indiana House of Representatives  
200 W Washington Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2786

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
Indiana State Senate  
200 W Washington Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2785

If it is an issue that you think that should have the Governor’s attention,

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
Governor of the State of Indiana  
200 W Washington Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

5. Briefly state why you are interested in a particular bill. State why you want your legislator to vote for or against the bill to help get the bill out of committee. Try to limit the length of your statement.
6. Give pertinent reasons and facts. Don't fabricate material to give in to rumors. Write from a personal perspective how this bill will affect you, your family, workplace or community. You may want to scan and include clippings from your local paper, highlighting key points and include the name of the paper and the date.
7. Time your correspondence to reach your legislator near when the bill is being considered in his or her chamber.
8. Be courteous. Never resort to attacks, threats or actions that can be considered unlawful, no matter what your legislator's past actions were.
9. Contact a legislator from another district only if he or she is chairperson of committee you wish to influence.
10. Quality, not quantity, counts. Contact a legislator only once regarding a subject unless you have new information to offer.
11. Sign your name and include your e-mail address to facilitate a response.
12. Thank your legislator for their time and for voting to support your views.
13. You can never be too polite. It is okay to send a follow-up correspondence thanking your legislator for their efforts, regardless of the outcome.

Being involved with legislation and the governmental process is your right as a citizen. It is an honor to represent your organization to advance the views and programs of that organization and your support in dealing with legislative issues may be called upon. If there is an issue that the IEHA State Board feels that the membership could help to advance, you will be contacted through the IEHA Communication Tree. As a member, you should know where you are on that "tree" and help to distribute positive information to the membership in your club and community.