



## How to Write Your Legislators

**Be Confident:** Many people believe legislators do not read communication constituents send to them. This simply isn't true. You can be certain your communication will be read by the legislator or an aide. At the federal level, your communication will almost always be answered, if you're a constituent. That usually is true at the state and local levels as well. Today, because of the heightened security, legislators' offices almost always prefer e-mail or fax over U.S. mail. If you decide to send paper copies, consider hand delivery by your association staff or lobbyist.

**Be Direct:** In the first line of your message, tell your legislator what action you want him or her to take, such as introduce legislation, cosponsor a bill, vote for (or against) a bill in committee or on the floor. Try to get his or her commitment to do what you ask.

**Do Not Neglect the Subject of Your Message:** The easiest way to ensure that your message moves to the top of the stack is to lead with a concise, information-packed, direct and confident subject line. Create a sense of urgency.

**Be Brief:** Boil your arguments down to one page or less—any longer and your audience will lose interest. Attach or hyperlink any detailed information you have to this page, but be careful of file size and type and random characters in your links on e-mails as these are likely to cause a message to get caught by a spam filter.

**Personalize Your Communication:** Use your personal or business stationery with a return address. If you are sending an e-mail, include the same information you would in a letter or fax. State your views in your own words. Use brief but specific examples of the impact on your own business. Avoid using postcards and form letters.

**Have the Facts:** The more facts you know, the better. Refer to bills by title or number. Cite experts when needed to back you up.

**Focus on One Issue:** Your communication will be given the attention it deserves if you speak out on only one issue at a time.

**Be Civil:** Don't threaten, insult, wisecrack or name call anyone, even the opposition.

**Don't Overdo It:** Don't write too often. Keep your communication timely so your legislator can act effectively on your behalf.

**Follow up:** Always praise your legislator if he or she does what you asked. A note of thanks will be appreciated and remembered.

AMERICAN SUBCONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION, INC.

1004 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-3588

Phone: (703) 684-3450 Fax: (703) 836-3482

E-mail: [ASAOoffice@asa-hq.com](mailto:ASAOoffice@asa-hq.com) Web: [www.asaonline.com](http://www.asaonline.com)