

Tips for Writing or Calling Your Legislator

The Chancellor may call on you to write or contact your state senator and assembly member on issues of importance to California's community colleges. At such time, background information will be supplied.

The following guidelines will help you draft the most effective letter:

- Be courteous, brief, and to the point, limiting your letter to one page.
- Make sure the legislator knows this communication is from a community college representative in the legislative district.
- Explain how the issue affects your community college district, students, and community and why you support/oppose it.
- Don't attempt to give "expert" opinions. Express how the legislation would affect your community college district based on your experience and knowledge.
- Ask your legislator to let you know what his/her thoughts are on the matter.
- Write the letter in your own words. This is more effective than copying provided background information verbatim.
- Request that your legislator take a specific action by stating what you desire. State the facts as you see them. Avoid emotional arguments. If you use dollar figures, be realistic.
- Keep all communications friendly and respectful. Don't make threats or write in a belligerent manner. Be sure to thank your legislator for considering your views.
- Email a copy of your letter to the General Counsel's Office.

Telephone Contact

If you are requested to call a legislator, the following guidelines will help:

- When the Legislature is in session, it is most effective to call at the Capitol office in Sacramento. During the Legislature's recess, the legislator will be available at the district office.
- Ask to speak directly to the legislator, but be prepared to ask to speak with the staff person who is handling the particular issue.
- When the legislator or staff member is on the line, identify yourself and mention the Los Rios Community College District.
- State the reason for the call. Explain how the issue affects your community college district and why you support or oppose it.
- Discuss only one issue per telephone call.
- If the legislator's position is the same as yours and the League's, express agreement and thanks.
- If your position differs from the legislator's, politely express disappointment and offer some factual information supporting your views. You may also offer to have local district and League staff provide further information on the matter.
- Ask the legislator to take a specific action. State the facts as you see them and avoid emotional arguments. If you use dollar figures, be realistic.
- Keep all communication friendly, respectful and brief. Be sure to thank your legislator for considering your views.
- Thank the legislator and then follow-up with a written note.