

Use the following guide and tips for more effective advocacy through telephone calls, emails, and social networking.

Telephone Calls

If you are unable to speak to the legislator directly, ask to speak with the staff member handling the issue. Make sure to keep the call brief by sticking to one topic and always be courteous.

1. Identify yourself as a CAI member as well as a constituent living in (or working with) a community association.
2. Identify the issue, bill number or name of the bill.
3. State your position and how the bill will personally affect you or your community. If you are responding to a CAI call to action, personalized the boilerplate information CAI provided.
4. Offer *positive* suggestions or alternative strategies to resolve the issue.
5. Be specific about the action you want from the legislator (support/oppose/amend the current legislation).
6. Request a letter of reply stating the legislator's position on the issue (provide your name, address, and telephone number).
7. After the call, follow up with a personal letter that reiterates your call and indicates that you also called the office to express your views.

Emails

1. Identify your specific request in the subject line.
2. Include the name and or number of the bill or issue and your position.
3. Identify yourself as a constituent, resident, or profession working with a community association.
4. Explain how the bill will affect you or your community. If you are responding to a CAI call to action, personalized the boilerplate information CAI provided.
5. Offer *positive* suggestions or alternative strategies to resolve the issue.
6. Be specific about the action you want from the legislator (support/oppose/amend the current legislation).
7. Request a letter of reply stating the official's position on the issue (make sure you provide your name, address, and telephone number).
8. Carefully proof your email for grammar and spelling before sending.

Social Media

- Be visual – share pictures from your meeting or a CAI infographic
- Write like you talk – show your personality so that readers, including legislators, feel like they're talking to a real person.
- Avoid politics (talking about elections, candidates and races)
- Tie your tweet to existing conversations or campaigns using hashtags (#) and handles (@).
 - On Facebook use hashtags like: #CAI, #Issue, #Legislatorname
 - On Twitter and Instagram use both hashtags and handles like: @CAIadvocacy
- Retweet and comment - Retweet posts from other people or your legislator's office and comment thoughtfully on what they're sharing.
- Build an audience of followers who care about the same issue. Demonstrate your community association knowledge and credibility over time. Share your background details that reinforce your expertise.
- Remember that legislators want to engage with those who have the following to positively influence the way that other constituents view their efforts.