

# 10 TIPS FOR TALKING TO LEGISLATORS

Communicating with elected officials is a basic mechanism to influence policy and effect lasting change.



**1** Get to know your Representative and your Senator. Read their biography, check out their social media. What committees do they serve on? What are their areas of expertise or legislative interest? You can find a lot of this info by searching for them on the OK State Legislature website: [oklegislature.gov](http://oklegislature.gov).

**2** Tell them your name, what you do, and where you live (bonus points if you're their constituent!). Legislators are more likely to accept calls or visits from constituents who live/vote in their district or have a direct connection to their district.

**3** Be kind and polite. Listen - even if you don't agree. Be open, honest & respectful.

**4** Get to know your legislator's assistant. These influential individuals often hold the keys to accessing the legislator and can help or hinder you cause.

**5** Know your issue. You don't have to be an expert, but it's helpful to identify your issue with the bill number and bill author. Remember, your personal story and perspective on the issue is the most powerful tool you can use.

**6** Be specific and concise when you speak. Explain why you support or oppose a measure - just remember to keep it short. Always include a request for their help and support.

**7** Know the opposition to the measure. Odds are good you will be asked, "Who opposes this legislation?". It's always helpful if you know the answer and can be honest in your response.

**8** If you don't know something or can't fully answer a question, the best reply is always: "I'm not sure about that, but I will find out and get back with you." Remember to follow-up.

**9** Follow up is IMPORTANT. Write a quick note or email thanking the legislator for their time while restating your request for support.

**10** Never threaten or use scare tactics. Burning bridges is never good, and you may need the support of this legislator in the future.