

## How to Talk With Your Elected Officials

We thank Lori Huftes for some of this information. Lori use to work on Capitol Hill fielding calls to her U.S. Senator's office. These are tips to make calling your representative or Senator easier and quicker. These tips are helpful whether you are calling or emailing, and whether you are contacting your U.S., Kansas, county, or municipality elected official.

- Assume your legislators are allies. Be positive. It is important that, when possible, you interact with elected decision-makers on a regular basis. Then when you have an issue to discuss, you have already established a relationship.
- At the state and federal levels, so many bills are introduced that it is impossible for a lawmaker to study all of them. Instead, they rely on their constituents, other members of Congress or the Legislature – and lobbyists – to familiarize them with the contents of many bills. This means that the elected official **NEEDS** to hear from **you!**
- Give your name, city, and zip code, and say “I don't need a response.” That way, they can quickly confirm you are a constituent, and that they can tally you down without taking the time to input you into a response database.
- **PLEASE ONLY CALL YOUR OWN REPRESENTATIVES!** Your tally will not be marked down unless you can rattle off a city and zip from the state, or are calling from an in-state area code. I know you really want to give Mitch McConnell a piece of your mind, but your call will be ignored unless you can provide a zip from Kentucky. And don't try to make this up; I could often tell who was lying before I even picked up the phone from the caller ID. **Exceptions** to this are things like notifying the entire state committee that is having a hearing on a bill.
- State the issue, state your position. “I am opposed to a ban on Muslims entering the U.S.” “I am in favor of stricter gun control legislation including background checks.” “I am in favor of the Affordable Care Act.” that's it. That's all we write down so we can get a tally of who is in favor, who is against. It doesn't matter **WHY** you hold that opinion. The more people calling, the less detail they write down. Help them out by being simple and direct. **Exceptions** are when you are writing, but your reasons may not be read.
- Don't overwhelm the elected official with information. Keep it concise, easy to understand and free of jargon that might be familiar to you or members of an organization you are representing but may be Greek to the lawmaker.
- Please be nice! The people answering the phones on Capitol Hill and in your Kansas Representative and Senators office already have the hardest job, some of the lowest pay, and with nonstop calls for 9 hours every day. Thank them for their hard work answering the phones, because without them our Representatives and Senators could not represent us.
- What does this sound like?  
"Hi, my name is Mark, I'm a constituent from Seattle, zip code 98\*\*\*, I don't need a response. I am opposed to any ban on Muslims entering the United States and I encourage the Senator to please oppose implementation of any such ban. Thanks for your hard work answering the phones!"

- This makes it easier for the people answering the phones or tallying the emails, and takes less time and emotion than a long script. I know that you want to say why, but keeping it short and sweet helps the office answer more calls per hour, meaning more people get heard. The bigger the tally, the more powerful our voice.
- Also, when you're reading off the same script as 100 other callers that day... well...they can tell. Pick one issue each day, use this format (I am in favor of \_\_\_\_\_ or I oppose \_\_\_\_\_), and call your 2 Senators and 1 Representative on their DC and State Office lines, and you'll be on your way to being heard.
- Avoid form letters and emails! These are often created by organizations as an easy way for advocates to request action on a particular topic, but some Legislators won't read anything in that format. Use your own words and personalize your letter or email by explaining how the issue will affect you, your family, your profession, or your community.
- If you want to have a deeper discussion with your Elected Official, call or email to make an appointment for a call, zoom meeting, or an in-person meeting. This can be really difficult during the legislative session as they are so busy.
- When meeting with an elected official, make sure you are prepared. Try to anticipate every question that might be asked. Nothing will cause you to lose credibility faster than being ill-prepared, uncertain, or vague. If there is a simple handout or information sheet that you can leave, it helps him or her keep these facts in front of them as they consider the issue about which you're meeting.
- A brief thank you note following your visit is not mandatory, but it is always appreciated and helps your legislator remember you and your issue.
- Contacting your legislator may seem intimidating, but it's important to remember that he or she is elected to represent you in the legislative process. It's worth the effort and does get easier with a little practice.

## **Your access to the Kansas Legislature:**

Legislator's contact information, Rosters, Committees, Agendas, Bills, Schedules, Hearings, Chamber Actions, Audio and Video – live and recorded, Current Events, Legislative Resources, Other State Resources and Much More.

<http://kslegislature.org/li/>

The above website for the Kansas Legislature is the key to accessing information about how to contact your legislators, committee assignments, schedules, bills introduced, and most importantly in the time of Covid - how to access hearings etc. remotely. Kansas has spent a few million of the federal CARES Act funds on upgrading on-line visual and audio systems at the Capitol. Given the uncertainty of the pandemic and improving public access remotely, each of the 13 committee rooms now have improved sound quality and three cameras to view the committee and presenters. There will be three monitors in

each committee room to facilitate virtual links for staff and testimony remotely. The internet speed has been upgraded for clearer visual and audio production.

**To access House and Senate Calendars:**

Published daily; and on Thursdays, calendars are published for the next week. They provide Committee Schedules, list bills or informational hearings to be heard, and possible votes.

Go to <http://kslegislature.org/li>

**To access copies of bills introduced:**

Go to the Kansas Legislature's homepage at <http://kslegislature.org/li/> and on the right side of the page click on the House and Senate pre-filed bills.

**To view and listen to a committee hearing:**

Go to the very top of the Legislature's homepage <http://kslegislature.org/li/> and click on the Audio-Visual tab and scroll down to 'Statehouse Live & Archive'. There will be a listing of the committees for that day and the start time. In order to testify on a bill before a given committee, you will need to contact the 'committee assistant' (listed in the Calendar) a day or so before the hearing to be able to testify in person or virtually.

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**To view Senate & House Chambers in session:**

Go to <http://kslegislature.org/li/> Audio/Video Broadcast and click on House or Senate.

**League of Women Voters of Kansas**

website: [www.lwvk.org](http://www.lwvk.org)

Fb: <https://www.facebook.com/lwv.kansas>

email: [contactus@lwvk.org](mailto:contactus@lwvk.org)

## U.S. (KS) Senators and Representatives

### Senator Jerry Moran

Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 521

Washington, D.C. 20510

Phone: (202) 224-6521

Website (email): <https://www.moran.senate.gov/public/>

Kansas Offices:

1200 Main St, #402, Hays, KS (785) 628-6401

306 N Broadway St, #125, Pittsburg, KS (620) 232-2286

23600 College blvd, #201, Olathe, KS (913) 393-0711

1880 Kimball Ave, #270, Manhattan, KS (785) 539-8973

100 N Broadway Ave, #210, Wichita, KS (316) 269-9257

### Senator Roger Marshall

Russell Senate Office Building, Suite B33

Washington, D.C. 20510

Phone: (202) 224-4774

Website (email): <https://www.marshall.senate.gov/>

No Kansas offices open yet.

### U.S. House KS District 1: Tracey Mann,

522 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515; Phone: (202) 225-2715

100 Military Avenue, Suite 203, Dodge City, KS 67801

Website: <https://mann.house.gov/>

### U.S. House KS District 2: Jacob LaTurner,

1630 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515; Phone: (202) 225-6601

402 North Broadway St, Pittsburg, KS:

Website: <https://laturner.house.gov/>

### U.S. House KS District 3: Sharice Davids,

1541 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515; Phone: (202) 225-2865

7325 W. 79<sup>th</sup> Street, Overland Park, KS 66204, Phone: (913) 621-0832;

753 State Avenue, Suite 460, Kansas City, KS 66101, Phone (913) 766-3993;

Website: <https://davids.house.gov/>

### U.S. House KS District 4: Ron Estes,

2411 Rayburn HOB, Washington, DC 20515, Phone: (202) 225-6216

7701 E. Kellogg, Ste. 510, Wichita, KS 67207, Phone: (316) 262-8992

Website: <https://estes.house.gov/>

### Websites:

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/>

Find your US Senator and Representatives, see how they voted.

[https://ballotpedia.org/List\\_of\\_current\\_members\\_of\\_the\\_U.S.\\_Congress](https://ballotpedia.org/List_of_current_members_of_the_U.S._Congress)