

# Communicating with Your Legislators: A Handy Primer

## Writing Your Legislator



1. Use the **VCA Action Alert** system to communicate with your legislators during the General Assembly session. This system will automatically link you to YOUR delegate and/or state senator. You will have the opportunity to edit the email if you choose. The VCA position on the legislation will be imbedded in the email you will send.
2. If you edit the template email, check and correct spelling and grammar!

## Visiting Your Legislator



1. Be respectful and kind to the secretary and the aide.
2. Make an appointment. (It is equally important to visit legislators when they are at home as it is when they are in the General Assembly session.)
3. Be prepared to talk on one or two issues.
4. Be on time.
5. Identify yourself as a school counselor, licensed professional counselor, counselor students, and/or VCA member, and as a constituent.
6. Briefly and concisely share your experiences and first-hand knowledge of education issues.
7. Leave written materials.
8. Offer to get more information, if needed.
9. Be willing to meet with the legislative aide if the legislator is unavailable.
10. Send a follow-up thank you note

## Telephoning Your Legislator



1. Give your name and full address.
2. Identify yourself as a constituent.
3. Identify yourself and your organizational affiliation.
4. Speak directly to the senator or delegate, if possible.
5. Be brief and concise. Focus on one issue.
6. Indicate your position.

## Before the General Assembly Session

11. [Click here](#) to identify your legislators:
2. Visit your senator and delegate at their home office.
3. Share any fact sheets that VCA is promoting.
5. Motivate your friends and family to make contact with their senator or delegate.

## During the General Assembly Session

1. Identify legislation in which you are interested.
2. Follow the legislation through action of subcommittee and committee.
3. Find out your legislators' committee and subcommittee assignments. The budget legislation will go through the appropriations or finance committees.
4. Contact your legislator when legislation reaches their subcommittee, committee, or the floor.

Email delegates:

Del+ delegate's first initial+ last name@house.virginia.gov

Example: [DelRBrink@house.virginia.gov](mailto:DelRBrink@house.virginia.gov)

Email senators:

district#@senate.virginia.gov

Example: [district28@senate.virginia.gov](mailto:district28@senate.virginia.gov)

**OR use the VCA Action Alert System**

## After the General Assembly Session

Write letters of appreciation to those who were helpful.

And don't forget: the very best time to visit with your legislators is between General Assembly sessions in your districts.

\*Thanks to the Virginia Education Association for this primer.

