

## CHECKLIST FOR TELEPHONE CALLS

### Four Keys

- ✓ Be Brief
- ✓ Be Timely
- ✓ Rehearse
- ✓ Be Prepared to Leave a One-Sentence Message

### Strategy

If you cannot say what you want to say within three minutes, write a letter.

### Dos and Don'ts

- ✓ **Do** make notes and practice what you want to say.
- ✓ **Do** identify yourself.
- ✓ **Do** use bill numbers if you have them.
- ✓ **Do** be prepared to leave a short message such as, "Please support House File 100, the Hunger Reduction Bill."
- ✓ **Don't** insist on a call-back.
- ✓ **Do** make phone calls before key votes. Respond quickly to organizational "alerts".
- ✓ **Don't** rely solely on the phone. Get to know your legislator through visits and letters.
- ✓ **Do** report back to your organizations on your phone conversations.

## LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION

### Most information available here

Minnesota Legislature: [leg.state.mn.us](http://leg.state.mn.us)

Joint Religious Legislative Coalition: [jrlc.org](http://jrlc.org)

### Who are my legislators? How can I reach him or her?

Senate information Office  
Room 231, State Capitol  
(651) 296-0504  
(888) 234-1112

House Information Office  
175 State Office Building  
(651) 296-2146  
(800) 657-3550

Hearing or speech disability use MN Relay Service — dial 711

### How can I find committee and floor session schedules?

[www.senate.leg.mn.us](http://www.senate.leg.mn.us)  
or call (651) 296-0504

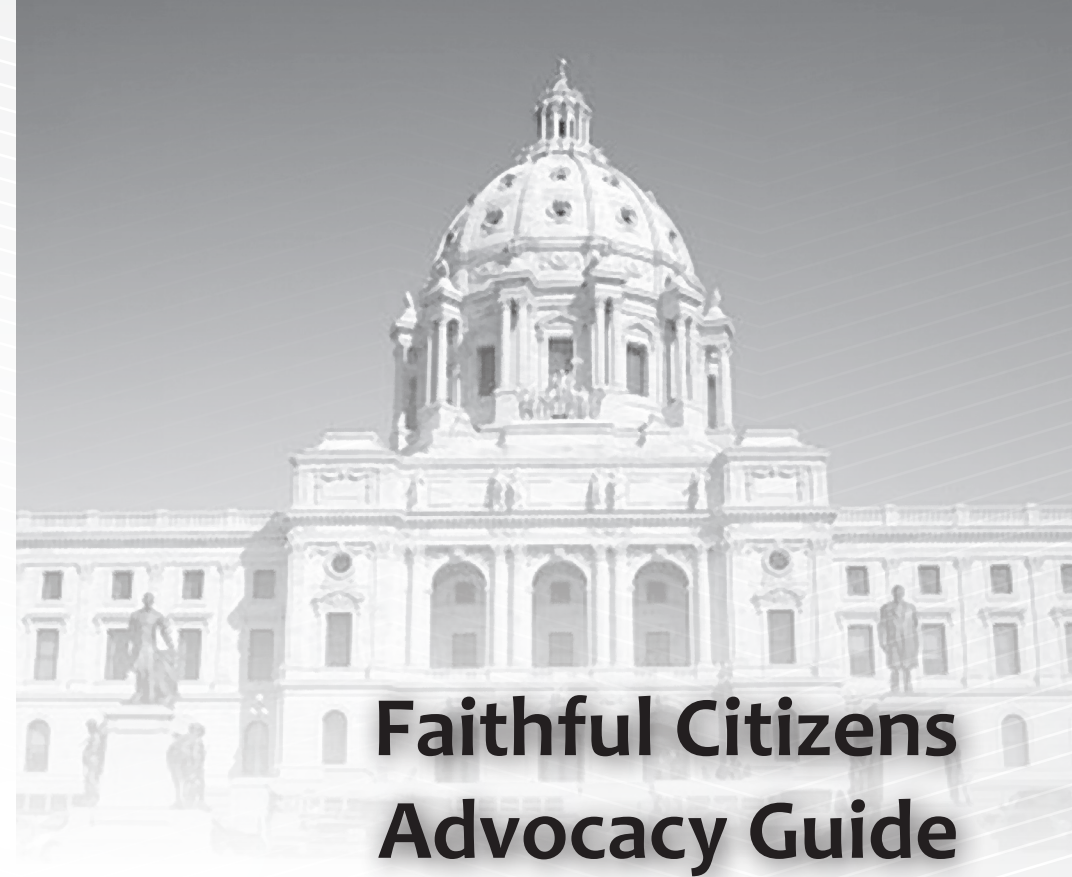
[www.house.leg.mn.us](http://www.house.leg.mn.us)  
or call (651) 296-9283

### How can I find committee and floor session schedules?

You can customize the legislature's website so that it lists the bill numbers you are interested in for easy tracking. Or call the staff.

Senate Index: (651) 296-2887

House Index: (651) 296-6646



# Faithful Citizens Advocacy Guide

MINNESOTA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE  
MINNESOTA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES  
JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL  
ISLAMIC CENTER OF MINNESOTA

Joint Religious  
**JRLC**  
Legislative Coalition

122 W Franklin Ave, Suite 315 | Minneapolis, MN 55404 | (612) 870-3670 | [www.jrlc.org](http://www.jrlc.org)

## GENERAL LOBBYING GUIDE

### Two Keys

- ✓ **Access** – Your ability to talk to a legislator as someone you know.
- ✓ **Credibility** – Your believability on the subject you are discussing.

### Strategy

#### Gain Access > Protect Credibility

If you don't have access you can't gain credibility. If you lose credibility, you will lose access. Get to know your legislator. It may take time, but begin now. Personal one-on-one relationships are the best.

### How to Lobby

**Schedule meetings:** Come prepared to discuss one issue and bring written information to leave behind. Keep the meeting short; just long enough to voice your concern.

**Write Letters:** Keep them brief and to the point. Keep them to one subject and avoid form letters. Neat, handwritten letters have the most impact. Be sure to include your name and address on the letter itself since envelopes sometimes get tossed.


**Use the telephone:** But keep in mind it is sometimes hard to get legislators directly. Talk to the legislator's staff. They often have better command of details and facts.

**Relax:** Be yourself. Lobbying is a perfectly legitimate and vital right each of us has as a citizen. Democracy thrives on an informed and active citizenry. If you vote (and you should!), why not follow-up and voice your concerns? You choose to either assert or abdicate your role as an active citizen.

### Dos and Don'ts

- ✓ **Do** know your facts.
- ✓ **Don't** bluff. If you don't know, admit it and get back with the information later.
- ✓ **Do** be brief and to the point.
- ✓ **Don't** pressure, threaten, or seek to intimidate. You are in this for the long-run.
- ✓ **Do** thank public officials and not just when you are asking for their support.
- ✓ **Do** leave something behind, such as a fact sheet or a copy of a bill.
- ✓ **Do** get involved with campaigns, advisory boards, and civic organizations.
- ✓ **Don't** underestimate your right to be heard. Elected officials serve the public.
- ✓ **Do** get to know your legislator.

### Use effective methods of contact

<b>Most Effective</b>  <b>Least Effective</b>	Face to face meeting
	Phone conversation
	Personalized letter (if legible, handwritten is best)
	Phone message, often left with staffer
	Personalized email (type "I'm a constituent" in subject line)
	Petitions, pre-printed postcards, just click e-mail, and other ready-made grassroots devices (though better than no contact at all)

## CHECKLIST FOR A MEETING

### Four Keys

- ✓ Be Prepared
- ✓ Be Respectful
- ✓ Stay on Topic
- ✓ Leave Behind a Written Summary

### Strategy

Schedule brief meetings right before key actions. Schedule longer, in-depth meetings during interim. After social pleasantries, get right to the topic. Make your case. Ask politely for action. Listen to the reply and state what you hear. Address any objections if you can.

### Dos and Don'ts

- ✓ **Do** get to the topic.
- ✓ **Don't** let small talk eat away your time.
- ✓ **Do** bring your personal story and stake in the issue. Credential yourself.
- ✓ **Do** bring fresh, credible information.
- ✓ **Don't** threaten electoral consequences.
- ✓ **Do** ask for support of your position.
- ✓ **Don't** burn bridges. Keep doors for communication open. Send a thank-you note.

## CHECKLIST FOR WRITING A LETTER

### Four Keys

- ✓ Be Brief
- ✓ Be Legible
- ✓ Be Polite
- ✓ Be Timely

### Strategy

Write the right legislator at the right time. You want your letter to reach a decision-maker right before he or she votes on the issue. Responding quickly to organizational "alerts" is crucial.

### Dos and Don'ts

- ✓ **Do** keep your letter to a single page and single subject.
- ✓ **Don't** write after a vote. Your letter counts beforehand.
- ✓ **Do** identify yourself. Make sure your name and address appear on the letter; envelopes get tossed. If you use letterhead, have a reason for doing so. If appropriate, cite your involvement or title with organization.
- ✓ **Do** use bill numbers if you have them.
- ✓ **Don't** use form letters. Once you have the basic facts, write the letter in your own words.
- ✓ **Do** ask for a response. How will you vote? What is your opinion on the issue? What information do you need?
- ✓ **Do** send a copy of your letter and any response to your organization.
- ✓ **Don't** expect an immediate reply.

### How to address the Letter

Senator Jane Smith  
Minnesota State Senate  
St. Paul, MN 55155

*Dear Senator Smith,*

Representative Bob Brown  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
St. Paul, MN 55155

*Dear Representative Brown,*