



TIPS



Interacting with your Representative during COVID-19

General:

- **DO** personalize your message
 - Local voices receive more attention. Include your city or county.
 - Explain how you have met or any other personal connection (if you know the representative)
 - Explain how the bill impact will their district including you and your organization
- **DO** be clear, concise and brief. State your action request early in your communication.
- **DO** use the bill number. (Senate Bill [446](#), House Bill TBD)
- **DO** have a specific ask (placed on committee agenda, reject amendments, vote for, etc.)
- **DO** report feedback to the West Virginia Nonprofit Association or Philanthropy West Virginia.
- **DON'T** just talk. Listening can be just as important.
- **DON'T** use acronyms and technical jargon. For example, instead of using NIP, use the Neighborhood Investment Program.

House of Delegates

- **DO** send an email
- **DO** leave a message. Most delegates do not have staff to help answer phones calls.
- **DON'T** send a letter via mail, these may not be looked at as quickly as an email
- **DON'T** be offended if your message is not returned. Late in the session, Delegates receive dozens of calls and may spend 10+ hours a day on the House floor or in committee meetings.

Senate:

- **DO** Communicate via:
 - Calls are **best** for Senators as they have Administrative Assistants. *Call early and often!* Even if you do not reach the Senator due to hectic schedules, the administrative assistants tally the types of calls for each day, so it will ensure your concern is counted.
 - Email is also a **good** avenue, but be sure to personalize it to show how the bill impacts you and your organization.
 - Facebook messages are also a **good** avenue for contact.
 - **DO** follow your leaders on all forms of social media.
 - **Know** your Senator well? Use the avenue of contact that you know they respond to best.
 - Or **TRY ALL** the avenues to make sure your message is heard in a respectful manner.

Finally:

Remember, do all things with **kindness**! When you are communicating your important message to staff, Delegates, and Senators, **always** be respectful in those communications. Each of the recipients are people doing their jobs in the best way that they can. Each message is a reflection on the nonprofit sector in our state, and we are counting on you to make that a positive message!