

Excerpt from "Policy Watch",
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4 Ways to Get Information
about legislators, bills, issues, making contact....

(1) USE THE INTERNET. At <http://www.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/Default.aspx> you can find the names of your legislators (or, go to www.leg.wa.gov and click on "FIND YOUR LEGISLATOR"), get brief biographies of each, plus room, email, and phone contacts.

Go to www.leg.wa.gov. It is a gold mine! You can find bills introduced by a given legislator, learn Committee membership, get a weekly schedule of hearings, or find a summary of bills introduced each day. Check out: "**Bill Information**" just to see what's available.

There you will find an easy way to sign up for "**Detailed Legislative Reports**" – including ways to **track bills**, the **agendas** of particular (or all) Committees, and detailed information about bills. Bill information (e.g., complete text, brief "digests," names of sponsors, bill status) can also be found by entering the bill number, or key words, in the search engine.

(2) CONTACT LEGISLATORS directly. You can – **CALL, WRITE, VISIT...**

CALL:

- you can call your legislators' offices directly, or
- there is a **TOLL-FREE HOTLINE:**
1-800-562-6000. TTY: 1-800-635-9993.

During the Legislative Session, operators are standing by:
weekdays from 8:00 am - 8:00 pm, and
Saturdays from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm.

HOTLINE Operators will send your message to:

- * one of your legislators, * all three of your legislators,
- * the Governor and Lieutenant Governor – or all of these, as you request.

They can tell you who your legislators are, or you can look them up at:
www.leg.wa.gov.

PLUS – they have **language translation** services. It helps if the person placing the call knows enough English to understand "Please Wait," and to report the language needed.

The operator will ask the caller to wait, will contact an Interpreter Service, and then connect a

3-way call with the: **HOTLINE Operator, the caller, and the Interpreter.**

WRITE:

-- Representative _____ or,
Senator _____

P.O. Box 40600 (House), P.O. Box 404[leg district] (Senate).
Olympia, WA 98504-0600 (**House**) Olympia, WA 98504-04[leg district]
(**Senate**)

EMAIL:

-- write your legislator's last name. first name@leg.wa.gov. (e.g.,
Truman.harry@leg.wa.gov.)

-- write a staff person's last name. first name@leg.wa.gov.

TIP: be sure to put your real name and home address (not just your email address).

VISIT:

■ **IN OLYMPIA**, any day during the session. Citizens are welcome.

■ Also look for **TOWN HALL MEETINGS** back in the District by mid-Session.

BONUS: A wonderful (free) resource is the **League of Women Voters**. Find them in your local phone directory, and ask for their "**TRY**" pamphlets listing phone/mail/email information for your local, state, and federal elected officials. 2007 TRY's are due soon.

TVW offers unedited TV and Web coverage of state government deliberations and public policy events – including coverage of many public hearings. For a schedule of live and archived coverage, go to: <http://www.tvw.org/>.

(3) CALL THE LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION CENTER – 360-786-7573, for information about bills, Committee action, or just about anything. These are some of the nicest, friendliest, most genuinely helpful people anywhere -- no matter how many requests they get, no matter how simple or complicated the question. They can also tell you who your legislators are – just give them your address + zip code (9-digit preferred).

(4) CONTACT AN ADVOCACY GROUP FOR YOUR ISSUE.

There is an advocacy group for almost every issue; ask to get their Legislative Alerts. They:

- ⇒ Monitor their issues closely,
- ⇒ Distribute weekly (or "as needed") Legislative Alerts,
- ⇒ Recommend positions on bills and budget items, and Suggest sample messages.
- ⇒ Many also organize Lobby Days.

To find an advocacy group on your issue: a) ask people affected by the issue, b) ask professionals who work in that field, c) ask friends, or, d) go to http://depts.washington.edu/sswweb/policyw/2207Useful_Info.pdf.