

# DO'S AND DON'TS WHEN CONTACTING YOUR STATE SENATOR

It would seem that this would be an easy assignment but there are some do's and don'ts that should be mentioned:

If the senator has voted in **favor** of the bill **DO**:

1. Thank him or her for the support. Be positive.
2. Encourage the senator to continue supporting the bill.
3. Keep your comments brief and to the point. Try not to ramble.
4. Make comments genuine and personal.

If the senator voted **against** the bill **DO**:

1. Be prepared with reasons why the senator should support the bill.
2. Encourage the senator to reconsider his or her vote.
3. Be respectful of the senator's decision.
4. Again keep your comments brief.
5. Make comments genuine and personal.

**DON'T:**

1. **Be negative about the senator's vote.** Point to all the reasons why the bill will benefit people with disabilities.

**DON'T:**

2. **Offend the senator.** If the senator appears adamant in his or her opposition, express your disappointment but respect the decision.

## *THE BEST WAYS TO CONTACT YOUR SENATOR*

**A personal meeting is the best.**

- Go in a group to save time.
- Keep the meeting brief. Everyone's time is valuable.
- Be prepared with you reasons why the bill should pass.

**A phone call is the next best thing.**

- You may be able to reach your senator during the interim at his or her home or business.
- The same rules apply as above, be brief and concise.
- If you are unable to reach the senator, you may want to contact the senator's legislative office and talk to the legislative aide. Staff will see to it that your comments are forwarded to the senator.

**LETTERS OR EMAILS ARE EFFECTIVE TOO**

Many people prefer this form of communication. It offers you a chance to write down your comments and be precise. Sample letters may be helpful for some ideas, but always write the letter in your own words. Form letters are not very effective – avoid using them.