

# Effective messaging

Briefly answer the following questions. They will help you develop a message that is clear and compelling – and short enough for testimony.

**How much time do you have?** Public testimony is usually 90 seconds to 2 minutes. A sit-down meeting with a legislator will be about 15 minutes. A chance meeting in a hallway will be about 30 seconds.

Decide early what you absolutely **MUST** share.

<p>Who are you?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name</li> <li>• Your legislative district</li> <li>• Any group affiliations, if appropriate</li> </ul>
<p>What is your issue?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe your issue. Your legislators track many issues and may not know yours</li> </ul>
<p>Why do <i>you</i> care?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why does this matter to you?</li> <li>• Why does it matter enough for you to take the time to write, call, or visit?</li> <li>• How will it change your life? The lives of people you know?</li> <li>• Tell a personal story</li> </ul>
<p>Why should <i>I</i> care?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why should your listener care?</li> <li>• What is happening in their district, community?</li> </ul>
<p>What do you specifically want <i>me</i> to do about it?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always have a clear call to action – a “to-do”</li> <li>• Always ask for an outcome or follow-up</li> <li>• Be specific in your request – don’t ask for support – that is vague. Ask for a yes or no vote. Ask that they help get a bill heard in committee or brought up for a vote, etc</li> <li>• Sometimes the best action you can hope for is keeping the dialogue open – ask if they would be willing to read some supporting materials and then get a follow up phone call from you</li> </ul>

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