



# **How to Contact Your Local Legislator**

## **Finding Your Local State Representatives**

Get to know who represents you in Albany. If you want to verify who your Senators and Assembly members are, you can go to [www.assembly.state.ny.us](http://www.assembly.state.ny.us) or [www.senate.state.ny.us](http://www.senate.state.ny.us) and enter your zip code to locate them.

## **Making an Appointment and Corresponding with your Local Legislator**

When sending correspondence to your local representatives, always include the name of your business, location, length of ownership and number of employees in your company. If you are requesting a meeting with your local legislator, please leave the appropriate contact information with the office. At the meeting please bring enough copies of materials so that they can be left behind with the legislator at the conclusion of the meeting.

## Here are some simple **DO's** and **DON'Ts**

### **DO**

- Address your Senator or Assemblymember properly.
- Identify yourself immediately at each contact. Public officials meet too many people to remember everyone.
- Know the status of the legislation. Refer to a bill by number whenever possible.
- Use your own words.
- Be brief and explicit, courteous and reasonable.
- Establish your own credentials or expertise on the subject of legislation under consideration.
- Give legislators succinct, easy to read literature; highlight important facts and arguments.
- Get to know legislative staff and treat them courteously. Their cooperation can make or break your chances to reach the legislators themselves.
- Always keep off-the-record comments confidential.
- Comment you approve, not just to criticize or oppose, when possible.
- Keep the door open for further discussion in spite of any apparently negative attitudes.

### **DON'T**

- Don't begin, "As a citizen and tax payer" (your elected representative knows we all pay taxes).
- Don't apologize for taking his or her time. If you are brief and to the point s/he will be glad to hear from you.
- Don't argue or back recalcitrant legislators into a corner where they take a definite position against you.
- Don't send copies or form letters unless you have taken the time to include a personal note.