

DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE MESSAGES

If you can come up with brief answers to these five questions, you are well on your way to coming up with a message that is succinct, clear, and compelling.

1. WHO ARE YOU?
 - Name?
 - Do you live in the legislator's district? Are you a constituent?
 - Are you affiliated with an organization? How many members? Statewide? Regional?

2. WHAT IS YOUR ISSUE?
 - Be prepared to describe your issue and don't be surprised if your legislator is unfamiliar with it – legislators have their policy plates full of everything from salmon to roads to child care to prisons.
 - Be prepared to describe your issue briefly and plainly (no more than two to three sentences) – don't bombard them initially with the details. You can communicate the detail in the form of written materials that you can leave behind.

3. WHY DO YOU CARE?
 - Why does this matter to you?
 - Why does it matter enough for you to take the time to write, call or visit?
 - How will it change your life? The lives of people you know?
 - Tell a personal story, tell a story from your heart – no one has ever been moved by a beautiful graph.

4. WHY SHOULD I CARE?
 - Why should your listener care?
 - What's happening in their district, their community?

5. WHAT DO YOU SPECIFICALLY WANT ME TO DO ABOUT IT?
 - Always have a clear call to action – a "to-do"
 - Always ask for an outcome, follow-up
 - Be specific in your request – don't ask for "support," support is a vague thing. Ask for a "yes" or a "no" vote. Ask that they help get a bill heard in committee or brought up for a vote.
 - 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.

FAITH ACTION NETWORK

A Partnership for the Common Good

Now it's your turn...

1. WHO ARE YOU?

(Assume, for the purposes of this exercise, that you are speaking to your own legislators)

2. WHAT IS YOUR ISSUE?

3. WHY DO **YOU** CARE?

4. WHY SHOULD I CARE?

5. WHAT DO YOU SPECIFICALLY WANT ME TO **DO** ABOUT IT?

FAITH ACTION NETWORK

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