



## How to Adopt Your Legislator

To positively impact the lives of Pennsylvania's adult learners, citizens must communicate continuously and consistently with their elected officials. Communication can consist of phone calls, letters, e-mails, or personal visits.

### ***Tips for Phone Calls***

1. Call state and federal legislators in their Capitol or district offices. When the state legislature is in session, state House and Senate members are usually in their Harrisburg offices Mondays through Wednesdays and in their district offices Thursdays and Fridays.
2. Identify yourself. Tell the person answering the phone who you are, whom you represent, and your reason for calling.
3. Ask to speak with your lawmaker directly. If he or she is not available, ask for a staff person with direct responsibility for your area of interest. A receptionist can share your legislators' schedule and meeting availability.
4. Leave a message with the receptionist or aide, voicing your support or opposition to the House or Senate bill or policy issue in question.
5. Be concise. State your reason for supporting or opposing the bill. Ask the lawmaker's position.
6. Don't burn bridges. Be polite even if the lawmaker does not agree with you. You may need his or her support in the future.
7. Follow up your phone call with a thank you note, briefly restating your conversation.

### ***Personal Visits***

1. Plan your visit carefully. Know what you want to say and how you are going to say it.
2. Make an appointment.
3. Be on time, but be patient if necessary. Remember, many people are waiting for the same opportunity to discuss their issues with lawmakers.
4. Bring a reference sheet with quick bullet points about your issue that you can leave with the lawmaker (The Adult Literacy Fact Sheet).
5. Find out the lawmaker's position on the issue and the reason for his or her position.
6. Always be polite, even if the lawmaker does not share your position on the issue. You may need his or her support in the future.
7. Follow up your meeting with a thank you note.
8. After your meeting, please let PAACE know how it went.



### **Writing Letters, Sending E-mails**

While e-mails, form letters, and petition signing can be effective, they generally are less so than individually signed personal letters.

1. When writing letters, state your purpose in the first paragraph. If you are writing about a particular bill, identify it in the first paragraph.
2. Explain the importance of your position.
3. Identify yourself and your organizational affiliation.
4. Keep the letter simple and concise. Address only one issue per letter. Keep your letter short, with only a few sentences in each paragraph and appropriate spacing between paragraphs.
5. Whenever possible, personalize your story.

### **Addressing Correspondence and Greetings**

State/Federal Representative

Honorable (Representative's full name)

Dear Representative (last name),

State/Federal Senator

Honorable (Senator's full name)

Dear Senator (last name),

Governor

Honorable Edward G. Rendell

Governor

225 Main Capitol Building

Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Rendell,

*Source: The Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center*

To obtain information on contacting your state representatives:

[www.legis.state.pa.us](http://www.legis.state.pa.us)

To obtain information on contacting your federal representatives:

[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)

[www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)