



ICIC Key Contact Program

Contact Tips

Your legislators were elected to represent you, their constituent, in the Illinois General Assembly. When deciding how to vote on an issue, they look to the information they have at hand – be it from staff, from lobbyists, or their own background, but most importantly, they look to input from their constituents. It is YOUR opinion that matters the most, so do not be afraid to share your thoughts with them.

Establishing a Relationship

By meeting with a legislator in his or her home district, you have their attention. They know you are a constituent. They are less busy. They are not being bombarded by literally hundreds of issues as they are while in Springfield.

Call the district and ask to set up a “get to know you” meeting for lunch, for coffee, or when your member has some free time in the office. Discuss the more general issues affecting the construction industry. Tell him or her how these issues affect your business. Once you have established a relationship, he or she will be more likely to take your call or pay attention to your letter when an issue boils up.

Invite your legislator to attend construction industry events in the district. Schedules are tight for most legislators, but they appreciate the opportunity to meet their constituents in group settings. They have the opportunity to get to know you, the industry, AND the issues we face.

Invite your legislator to visit a worksite and meet your employees. This is a good one-on-one opportunity for you and your legislator, to show them first hand the work that you do and meet those who work with you. Plus legislators always need good photo opportunities for upcoming newsletters and mailings!

Attend events held by your legislators. Get a foursome together and attend your legislators’ golf outings. Take the time to visit with her at her dinner or reception fundraiser. Let her know that you value the work she does in Springfield, and while you are there, share with her again information regarding the issues you face in the industry.

Communicating on a Specific Issue

At the beginning of the legislative session – early January – most of our communication surrounds the ICIC legislative agenda. Later on in session as a bill moves through the legislative process, we will have a need for immediate action on pressing issues.

Forms of Communication

If time allows, written letters – mailed or faxed – provide an effective means of communicating. Letters have more visual impact and demonstrate that the issue is important enough to warrant the effort of drafting a letter.

If more immediate action is needed, a phone message to the legislative office or an e-mail may be the only option.

If you have established a good relationship with your legislator, a phone call to his Springfield office is a highly effective tool.

In the ideal situation, your relationship with your legislator will be such that HE will call YOU to get your opinion when a construction industry vote arises.

Tips on the Approach

Legislators are busy, so be concise and to the point.

Be aware of the bill number for the issue you are addressing, and where it stands in the process. If you are not sure, give us a call at 217-528-3434, and we can look it up. You can also monitor legislation on the General Assembly web site at www.legis.state.il.us.

Include facts, figures and statistics. Members like to have numbers to support their positions. What will it cost the industry? How many other states have these laws? Will it make it easier/more difficult to compete with neighboring states?

Be specific on how the bill or issue affects you and your business. Will it raise your expenses by \$XXX per year? Will you have to lay off employees? Will it allow you to expand the capacity of your operation?

Be polite and respectful, regardless of his ultimate position. Even if your legislator is not with ICIC on this issue, you do not want to alienate them for the next one.

As a constituent of your legislator, YOU are the most effective lobbyist we have. Thank you for letting your voice be heard.