



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

## COMMUNICATING WITH OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

### *Practical Tips for Success*

Lutheran Social Services of Michigan  
North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA  
Southeast Michigan Synod, ELCA

#### **Be Prepared**

- Understand your issues and concerns
- Think about the faith-based and practical ramifications of the work of elected officials
- Be sincere but avoid being preachy
- Many people we elect to public office have a faith perspective—try to connect
- Elected officials are seeking to address the common good—but their perspective may be different than yours

#### **Tell Your Story**

- Talk about real people and their circumstance in your community
- Tell your Representative and Senator stories about their districts
- Talk about your concerns—personally and up-close
- All things are local to our elected officials
- In a recession policy making is dominated by budget decisions
- Think about budget cuts versus revenue

## **Tell the Truth**

- Don't misconstrue or exaggerate the situation
- The facts will do just fine
- Avoid partisanship or statements that could be smears
- Reinforce your role as a constituent—part of his or her personnel committee
- Frankness tempered by moderation will win in the long run
- Be polite even when discussing conflicting points of view

## **Always Ask for Something**

- Know what you want from public officials
- Frame the “ask” ahead of time—if you are part of a group, plan for different people to address different aspects of the problem
- Elected officials expect requests from constituents
- Have a solution in mind and be prepared to advocate on its behalf
- Follow up with questions or a progress report

## **What's Next?**

- When you get home send a thank you note
- Summarize the issues discussed and ask follow up questions
- If appropriate, invite your Representative and Senator to visit programs in their districts
- Always be thankful and reflect that in your advocacy efforts
- Remember, we are called, in God's name, to be spokespersons for the common good

## **Preparing for Lutherans on the Lawn, Thursday, May 20**

- Write your Representative and Senator and invite them to lunch on the Capitol lawn on May 20.
- The time is Noon-3 pm to accommodate the sessions of both the House and Senate
- You can go to Lutheran Social Services Advocacy Site [www.lssm.org/advocacy](http://www.lssm.org/advocacy) to obtain email addresses for your elected officials
- For assistance, please contact Ben Baldus at [bbald@lssm.org](mailto:bbald@lssm.org) or call 517.374.8080

*Pastor Ben Baldus is the Director of the Office of Public Policy & Advocacy for Lutheran Social Services of Michigan. This guide was developed as one of many tools that are available to assist the Lutheran community of Michigan in addressing public officials. Contact him at:*

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