

How to contact your elected officials

Hello State Classified employees,

Updated October 9, 2017

Politics can be messy but the political process, messy as it may be is important. Our elected officials, at every level are there to represent us. Sometimes, they need our help, our perspective, our information, and our feedback. I want to encourage you all to reach out to your elected officials, get engaged in the process – and don't be shy to contact them and share your thoughts. I am writing today to provide a little guidance (and friendly nudge) about good protocol and a few basic rules.

Let's start with the rules (for State Classified employees):

- The State of Colorado, Department of Personnel & Administration, [Classified Employee Handbook](#) provides:
 - Political & Employee Activities**
Employees may participate in political activities, subject to state and federal laws. However, **no State facility or resource can be used for political activities and State employees are prohibited from using State time or the influence or authority of state employment to campaign for candidates.** Employees have the right to join an employee organization, however, solicitation of members is not allowed during work hours without prior approval from their appointing authority.
- The [State Personnel Board Rule 1-17](#) is also instructive. It states: Board Rule 1-17. Employees may participate in political activities subject to state and federal laws. No state time or property may be used for this purpose.
- In essence, university resources cannot be used to support a candidate for office or for a political event.
- CSU has a policy on employees contacting state and federal agencies and officials ([here](#)); it does not restrict an employee from communicating on the employee's own, personal behalf, but does restrict communications that purport to be made on CSU's behalf, or as a representative of the University.

What does that all mean?

- Do not write a letter / send an email / make a phone call – to your elected official while at work (on State time).
- Best practices: do not use your State (work) email account – send your message from your personal email account – this keeps it clean and clear that you did not use State resources to voice your opinion on an issue.
- If you write a letter – do not use university letterhead or envelopes.
- If you identify yourself as a CSU employee, make it clear you are writing on your own behalf, not in an official capacity or as a representative of CSU (unless you have prior permission to do so).

Now, a few suggestions and some helpful information. Please remember; keep it specific, professional, personal (about you), and respectful. Easy right?

- Don't know who your elected officials are? Here are a few resources to find out (or just Google "How do I find my elected officials?"):
 - Federal: <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>
 - State and local (just type in your zip code + four): <http://hg-salsa.wiredforchange.com/o/5950/getLocal.jsp?zip=80521&zip4=>
- Tips for writing / sharing your message (good etiquette):
 - Tips for Writing Letters to Your Elected Official: <https://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/EDU/Department2.aspx?id=7179>
 - Tips for Contacting: <http://www.lwvcolorado.org/contact-elected-officials.html>

As for me – feel free to contact me anytime, you can use your university email account. I am here to help if and as I can. I was in the 4-H program as a kid here in Colorado. I learned a lot about "Learning by Doing" – that practice has come in handy. I am learning a lot these days! Many thanks to you for getting active and involved in the political process. Best to you all.
Stacey

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