



Tips for Communicating to Minnesota Legislators

- Every Minnesotan is represented by one state Senator and one Representative. You can find out who represents you at <http://www.gis.leg.mn/iMaps/districts/> When you click on your legislators, you will be directed to their official Senate or House of Representatives site. There, you can find contact information; any town hall meetings they have scheduled; sign up for their legislative updates; etc.
- Four ways to contact your legislator: email, postal mail, phone call or attend a meeting the legislator is hosting in the district. All of these vehicles are important and they make a difference. A handful of informed communications from people in the districts they serve have a huge impact on legislators.
- Keep your message brief and to the point.
- Identify your connection to the legislator. (For example, “I live in your district” or “My business is located in your district.”) Provide a bit of background: (For example, “I have been a member of the Lions for 20 years.”)
- State the purpose of your message. (For example, “I am writing to urge your support for The Community Vitality Investment Act, HF226 and SF419/SF1069, to eliminate state taxes on the charitable gaming contributions from qualified organizations operating charitable gaming. We know that charitable gaming will continue to be taxed at a very high rate. We currently pay up to 7 times higher than comparable for-profit enterprises in Minnesota. But even HIGH taxes should be FAIR taxes. Right now, charitable gaming organizations are the only entities in the state that provide goods and services and are not able to deduct donations from their taxable income. That's not right. Across the state, charitable gaming organizations now are paying almost as much in state taxes as they are able to contribute to their missions. In our case, we contributed \$X to our core mission in 2016, but paid \$X in state taxes.”)
- Offer the solution. (For example, "The Community Vitality Investment Act, SF419/SF1069 and HF226, would eliminate taxes ONLY on our charitable contributions. In other words, we get the tax relief ONLY if we continue to invest in the kinds of programs that make our communities safer, healthier and more vital places to live, work and play. This is the only community investment program I know of that GUARANTEES that for every dollar of tax relief, a dollar is invested directly into the community.")
- Provide an example of the impact of this legislation on YOUR community and YOUR organization. (For example, “Last year, our organization was able to contribute \$15,000 toward the cost of a new pumper for our fire department. Without our support, the purchase of this vital piece of safety equipment would not have been possible. However, we ended up paying more in state taxes than we were able to contribute to our community missions. That’s not fair. Our organization invested thousands of hours in labor to raise money for the pumper. And even though we reached our goal, there are many things high taxes are preventing us from doing, including ____ and _____.The legislation would reduce our tax bill ONLY on the amount we contribute to our mission. There is a tax reduction ONLY if we and other charitable gaming organizations are able to increase our direct investments in the community. The rest of our revenue would continue to be taxed at the current very high levels.”)
- Ask for their commitment. (For example, “I hope you share my concern and that you will urge the leaders to include HF226 and SF419 in this year’s Omnibus Tax bill.”) Provide your contact information for follow-up (day phone, email, mailing address).
- Thank them for their attention to this issue.