

# Electronic mail for effective legislative lobbying and the ONE-CLICK System

Here are four examples of "email myths" that are repeated too frequently and I feel obligated to correct them.

1) **Myth: "Emails are just ignored....." or "Email doesn't work....."**

Response: Not any more or less than any other form of constituent contact (see #2 below). I have noticed that some people/"groups," especially on the Internet, seem to spend a large amount of time telling others that sending emails, such as the NRA Members' Council "ONE-CLICK" email system, doesn't work. Then they proceed to attack the NRA for "not doing anything in California" and at the same time, they want you to support their effort and send them your money and "join" them or sign their petition/ mailing list, etc. Some folks seem to think that they stand taller if they can chop someone else's efforts off at the knees. I believe that we all should focus on every available form of legislative contact that we can find. Let the legislators know that we all are watching them and we care about what they are doing to our freedoms. In this way, we all stand taller.

2) **Myth: "Emails are usually ignored, unless you have a staff person's email."**

Response: I have way too much experience to believe such a statement. I believe this myth is propagated by legislative staffers to discourage constituent lobbying via email. Email lobbying has added a tremendous amount of work-load to the legislative staff. I personally know several staffers and they all tell me (I have asked them) that emails are a pain because so many people now can contact their offices. As more people get "online," more people use electronic mail to lobby their legislators. The legislators recognize this fact and consider email to be every bit as valid as phone calls or other forms of lobbying.

3) **Myth: "Don't waste time contacting the local office (except maybe meeting a staffer). Contact the Sacramento office, that's where the decisions are made."**

Response: Worse advice, I have rarely heard. Contact ALL of the offices. The staff members are, sometimes, the most important people regarding legislation. Many times, the staff have been in the Capitol, or District Office, much longer than the elected representative. Remember, the staff is NOT subject to term limits. 😊

4) **Myth: "Legislators ignore you if you contact them and you are not in their district."**

Response: Another example of the legislators, and their staff, trying to minimize their exposure to the public. If the legislators vote only affected those who lived in his/her district, then his/her votes would have little impact on those who live outside of that district. But the fact is that every vote cast by every legislator can affect every person in California and that fact gives us all an equal right to contact every legislator in the state. Example: Several years ago, Lt.Col. Oliver North (USMC, ret.) ran for the U. S. Senate from Virginia. He received contributions from people all over the country. Many people wanted him to "represent them," even though they were not from Virginia.

Remember, you can multiply your grassroots lobbying effectiveness if you a) write your email, b) print it out, c) sign and fax the printed copy, and then d) mail it to their district and Capitol offices. Also, don't forget to phone both their district and Capitol offices.

Get to know the legislative staff. Sometimes, the best "PR" is building a good "Personal Relationship."

I hope this helps us all become more effective in our efforts. Don't hesitate to distribute this message to other NRA members in your club and your local NRA Members' Council.

In closing, please be aware that we, in the NRA, are not going to waste your time and effort on something that doesn't show a positive affect.

Thanks for all of your work. Please keep it up.

Up-to-date legislative information and access to the ONE-CLICK system can be found on the Internet at <http://www.calnra.com/legs.shtml> .

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