



BERTA'S BRIEFINGS

REPRESENTATIVE BERTA GARDNER

Serving Geneva Woods, College Village, Green Acres, Tudor, Taku & Campbell Park

FEBRUARY 7, 2011

TEN WAYS TO MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD IN YOUR LEGISLATURE

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

One of the things I enjoy most as your legislator is meeting with people in my district to hear their concerns and look for solutions.

Because the legislature is no spectator sport, I want to give some helpful suggestions on how you can make your voice heard. Remember, my staff and I are always here to help guide you through the process.

Here are some specific ways you as a citizen can be effective:

TEN WAYS TO MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD IN YOUR LEGISLATURE:



Constituent Dave Morgan recently visited my office. He shared some of his experience in the healthcare industry. My door is always open to constituents!

1. **IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM AND SOLUTION.** Clearly identify the issue you want to work on or problem you want solved. **One way to make your voice heard is to know exactly what you want changed** and whether state law needs to be changed. Some problems involve a local level fix and many problems can be solved without state legislation. Regardless, I am here to

help.

2. **STICK TO ONE ISSUE AT A TIME.** Focus only on one issue to get the legislature's attention and to mobilize your supporters.
3. **WHO ELSE IS WORKING ON THE ISSUE (BOTH FOR AND AGAINST).** Figure out if there are other like-minded people working on the same issue. **Identify local organizations, such as non-profits who share your views, and ask them to get involved.** Also, figure out who might oppose your issue as well as their arguments, so that you will be fully prepared.
4. **LEARN TO USE THE LEGISLATIVE WEBSITE TO TRACK BILLS AND FIND KEY PEOPLE.** The Legislative website has a wealth of information such as how to track bills (which is called BASIS); how to directly contact legislators and staff; as well as which legislators are on which committees. This will enable you to find those key legislators in charge of your issue. <http://intranet.legis.state.ak.us/> **If you want help navigating this website, please call my office and we will help.**
5. **TARGET KEY LEGISLATORS WORKING ON YOUR ISSUE.** Legislators are assigned to different committees each session. If you support or oppose a bill make sure you know which committees will hear the bill and which legislators will be voting on the bill in committee. **You can then target key specific legislators for meetings to solicit support.** The information you will need to do this is available on the BASIS system.
6. **IDENTIFY CITIZENS WHO LIVE IN KEY DISTRICTS.** Once you identify those legislators central to your issue, identify which of your supporters live in their districts. Don't forget many friends or co-workers might be willing to help you by contacting their legislators. **People who live in a legislator's district have special clout with that legislator.**
7. **FIND OUT WHEN KEY LEGISLATORS WILL BE IN ANCHORAGE.** Many legislators have District meetings in Anchorage on weekends during the legislative session. Nearly all legislators send out regular electronic newsletters. **Subscribe to these newsletters** by calling or emailing legislators individually to get on the lists.
8. **WHEN YOU VISIT LEGISLATORS, or WRITE to them PREPARE A ONE-PAGE OUTLINE.** Whether you are supporting a bill, issue or organization, when you communicate with legislators it helps to have a one page summary containing the issue, problem, solution, those concerned and your own contact information.
9. **USE THE MEDIA.** Once you have identified supporters and your message, consider calling the local press including television stations to let their news directors know about why this issue is important. The Anchorage Daily News has both reporters and editorial staff. Call the ADN's newsroom to find out which reporter would likely cover your type of issue. Contact editorial staff separately. Write a Compass piece and have a letter-to-the-editor writing party.
10. **COME TO OUR CONSTITUENT TOWN MEETING WITH SEN. JOHNNY ELLIS IN ANCHORAGE ON FEBRUARY 27 at 2 PM at Tudor Elementary.** Sen. Ellis and I want to hear what's on your mind and answer your questions.

If you can make it, I look forward to seeing you later this month at the constituent meeting.

I'm Berta and I'm still listening.

Berta



“With the start of this Legislative Session, AlaskaLegislature.tv has launched. This service is funded and produced by the Legislature and works to provide total access to all legislative hearings held in the Capitol. All committee rooms in the Capitol have been outfitted to stream live video (with audio) of meetings to the web. Tune in at <http://alaskalegislature.tv> to follow a committee hearing. Streams will be available shortly before the meeting starts and the audio will only be live when the committee is on-the-record.”
