

CHAPTER 10: CONTACTING ELECTED OFFICIALS

Delaware's small size and population offer residents ready access to government officials at all levels. It is now possible to contact them by e-mail, phone and fax as well as by letter.

Delaware's Congressional Delegation

Due to heightened security in the U.S. capital, mail service to the Washington, D.C. offices of Delaware's three congressmen may be delayed. It is best to send letters to a local office. To send e-mail do so from their websites since they require a Delaware address and respond to Delaware residents only.

Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr.: <http://biden.senate.gov>

1105 N. Market Street, Suite 2000, Wilmington, DE 19801-1233

Phone: 302-573-6345

Fax: 302-573-6351

24 NW Front Street, Windsor Building, Suite 101, Milford, DE 19963

Phone: 302-424-8090

Fax: 302-424-8098

201 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510

Phone: 202-224-5042

Fax: 202-224-0139

Senator Thomas R. Carper: <http://carper.senate.gov>

301 North Walnut Street, Suite 102L-1, Wilmington, DE 19801

Phone: 302-573-6291

Fax: 302-573-6434

300 South New Street, Suite 2215, Dover, DE 19904

Phone: 302-674-3308

Fax: 302-674-5464

12 The Circle, Georgetown, DE 19947

Phone: 302-856-7690

Fax: 302-856-3001

513 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510

Phone: 202-224-2441

Fax: 202-228-2190

Representative Michael N. Castle: <http://www.castle.house.gov>

201 North Walnut Street, Suite 107, Wilmington, DE 19801-3970

Phone: 302-428-1902 Fax: 302-428-1950

300 South New Street, Dover, DE 19904

Phone: 302-736-1666

Fax: 302-736-6580

Georgetown, DE: 302-856-3334

1233 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515

Phone: 202-225-4165

Fax: 202-225-2291

State Elected Officials

<http://www.delaware.gov/egov/portal.nsf/portal/elected>

Few residents live more than 50 miles from the state capitol in Dover and can easily reach Legislative Hall to observe, attend hearings or lobby. The above website gives extensive information about state elected officials.

Governor's offices

Tatnall Building, 150 William Penn Street, 2nd Floor, Dover, DE 19901

Phone: (302) 744-4101, 1-800-292-9570

Fax: (302) 739-2775

Carvel State Office Building, 820 N. French Street, 12th Floor, Wilmington, DE 19801

Phone: (302) 577-3210

Fax: (302) 577-3118

Directories of elected officials are available from the following:

The League of Women Voters of Delaware <http://de.lwv.org>

Click on *They Represent You* for a listing of elected officials or contact the office for a free printed copy.

2400 W. 17th Street, Clash Wing, Room 1, Lower Level, Wilmington, DE 19806-1311

Phone: 302-571-8948

Fax: 302-571-8948

Delaware League of Local Governments Directory

<http://www.ipa.udel.edu/localgovt/dllg/index.html>

P.O.Box 484, Dover DE 19903-0484

Phone: 302-678-0991

Fax: 302-678-4777

This directory is hosted and maintained as a public service by the University of Delaware's [Institute for Public Administration](#) and contains the most current information available to it about Delaware's municipalities and their respective government officials. No charge.

Other sources of information

- Delaware State Chamber of Commerce Legislative Roster

http://www.dscc.com/state_chamber/publications.htm

1201 North Orange Street, Suite 200, P.O. Box 671, Wilmington, DE 19899-0671

Phone: 302-655-7221

Toll free Kent and Sussex Counties: 1-800-292-9507

Fax: 302-654-0691

The Legislative Roster provides the names and addresses of members of the Delaware General Assembly, the congressional delegation and state and local government leaders. Also included are pictures of legislators and statewide officials, an introduction to State Chamber lobbyists, listings of Senate and House committees and their members, district maps, and voter registration information.

Price varies.

- Legislative Council www.legis.state.de.us

1- 800-282-8545

Legislative Council, a policy making body, is composed of ten legislators who are chosen by their colleagues to be the Leadership of the General Assembly. Most often, however, the name

is used to refer to the full time professional staff and clerical employees of the General Assembly and the area within Legislative Hall where they work. The Director is appointed by the Council but the other staff is employed on a nonpartisan basis under the Delaware merit system. The Office of the Controller General is an integral part of the Council.

- Information is available from Legislative Council via the website, by calling the toll free number or at its office in Legislative Hall including:

Copies of bills and amendments

House and Senate daily agenda

House and Senate rules

Lists of the members of legislative committees

Lists of legislators with Legislative Hall office numbers and phone numbers

Information on the status of bills, committee meetings and public meetings

Delaware Code

<http://www.delcode.delaware.gov/>

It is frequently necessary or useful to refer to the Delaware Code to determine the language of the current law in order to understand what a proposed bill would change. Public libraries also have bound copies of the Code.

Citizen Responsibilities

The first and foremost responsibility of citizens is to register and vote in all elections. Detailed information is given in Chapter 6 - Elections. Citizens owe to themselves and to their country the duty to become knowledgeable about legislative issues and to let their representatives know their opinions and concerns. Opinions may be expressed by phone, fax, letter, telegram and e-mail - or in person at meetings of City Council, County Council, the General Assembly, and offices of elected officials. In each instance be polite, explain why you are concerned and back up your opinion with as much information as possible. Appointments for personal interviews should be made in advance with the legislator or through his office.

Communicating with Your Elected Officials

Your voice is heard. Legislators at all levels do listen to constituent's opinions and consider the opinions and information presented to them in making their decisions. One letter/e-mail alone may not change a legislator's mind but your information added to others can make a difference.

When communicating with your legislator, it is wise to keep in mind the following:

If sending a letter/e-mail, use plain paper and type or write legibly. Give your address.

Write on only one subject at a time and make your communication brief.

If writing about a bill, identify it by number or by its popular name.

Be constructive in your opinions, explain briefly why you are concerned, what action you think should be taken and why. If you have specialized knowledge, give particulars.

Do not demand he vote for or against a certain bill.

Send a commendation when your legislator has done something of which you particularly approve. A thank-you is always good policy!

"Democracy is government by the people. Take away the people and all that is left is government. Half of democracy is us!"

--from The League of Women Voters of Maryland newsletter November/December, 1974