

## CHAPTER 10: CONTACTING ELECTED OFFICIALS

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

### Delaware's Congressional Delegation

Delaware's two U.S. Senators and one U.S. Representative maintain offices both in Washington DC, and one or more local offices in Delaware. The addresses and phone numbers for each office can be found on the senator or representative's website (see below).

Due to heightened security in the U.S. capital, mail service to the Washington, DC 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.

#### ***U.S. House:***

Because of its small size, Delaware has only one member in the U.S. House of Representatives. House members serve two-year terms with elections held every even-numbered year.

Contact information for Delaware's current representative can be found on his or her website, which has the general format ***http://<lastname>.house.gov*** (e.g. "bluntrochester.house.gov" for Representative Lisa Blunt Rochester). A link to the current Delaware US Representative's website is available on [www.house.gov/representatives/#state\\_de](http://www.house.gov/representatives/#state_de).

#### ***U.S. Senate:***

Like every other U.S. state, Delaware elects two members to the US Senate, for six-year terms, with elections held on staggered even-numbered years.

Contact information for the current senators can be found on their website, which has the general format ***http://<lastname>.senate.gov*** (e.g. "carper.senate.gov" for Senator Tom Carper). Links to the websites of the current US Senators for Delaware are available on [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov).

### State Elected Officials

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 [delaware.gov/topics/yourgovernment](http://delaware.gov/topics/yourgovernment) website gives extensive information about state elected officials.

#### ***Delaware General Assembly:***

Contact information for all current Delaware state senators is available online at [legis.delaware.gov/Senate](http://legis.delaware.gov/Senate), and for current state representatives at [legis.delaware.gov/House](http://legis.delaware.gov/House).

Many Delaware legislators also have an active social media presence, and can be followed or messaged on Facebook "public figure" or "politician" pages.

### ***Governor's Offices:***

The Governor and Lieutenant Governor of Delaware serve four-year terms, with elections held the same year as the U.S. Presidential election. The current office holder's information is located on the [governor.delaware.gov](http://governor.delaware.gov) and [ltgov.delaware.gov](http://ltgov.delaware.gov) websites.

#### *Wilmington office:*

Office of the Governor

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

Phone: 302-577-3210

Office of the Lt. Governor

Carvel State Office Building, 820 N. French Street, 10th Floor, Wilmington, DE 19801

Phone: 302-577-8787

#### *Dover office:*

Tatnall Building, 150 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd South, Dover, DE 19901

Phone: 302-744-4101 (Governor's office)

Phone: 302-744-4333 (Lieutenant Governor)

#### *Washington, DC phone number:*

Phone: 202-624-7724

**Directories of elected officials** are available from the following:

1. The League of Women Voters of Delaware - [lwvdelaware.org/Government.html](http://lwvdelaware.org/Government.html)

Click on the *They Represent You* link under the "Elected Officials" heading for a comprehensive listing of contact information of Delaware elected officials at the state and U.S. level. You may also contact the office for a free printed copy:

League of Women Voters of Delaware

2400 W. 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Clash Wing, Room 1, Lower Level

Wilmington, DE 19806-1311

Phone: 302-571-8948

2. Delaware League of Local Governments Online Directory - [ipa.udel.edu/localgovt/dllg](http://ipa.udel.edu/localgovt/dllg)

This directory is hosted and maintained as a public service by the University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration and lists Delaware government officials all the way down to the municipality (city or town) level.

### **Other sources of information**

- Delaware State Chamber of Commerce - [Legislative Roster](#)

The DSCC 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 registered voter counts for each district.

The roster is available to browse online for free, or can be purchased from the Chamber's Center for Business Management. Prices vary. Chamber member organizations can receive one complimentary copy.

DE Chamber of Commerce, Center for Business Management, Inc.  
1201 North Orange Street, Suite 200, P.O. Box 671, Wilmington, DE 19899-0671  
Phone: 302-655-7221 Fax: 302-654-0691  
Toll free Kent and Sussex Counties: 1-800-292-9507

- Legislative Council - <http://legis.delaware.gov/Committee/LegislativeCouncil>

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 following information is available from Legislative Council, for pick-up in person at their office in Legislative Hall, or by calling the toll-free number 1- 800-282-8545

- 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

Much of this information is also searchable online at [legis.delaware.gov](http://legis.delaware.gov)

- Delaware Code - [delcode.delaware.gov](http://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 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!

The League of Women Voters of Delaware [Lobby Handbook](#) has further letter-writing suggestions, including (near the end of the document) customary addresses and salutations for elected officials.

For those who have never contacted an elected official before, it may seem intimidating at first, but it gets easier with practice! Your representative cannot know your opinion on an issue unless you tell him or her about it.

**"Democracy is not a spectator sport, it's a participatory event.  
If we don't participate in it, it ceases to be a democracy"**  
*--Documentary filmmaker Michael Moore*