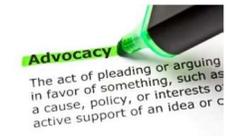


# Faith and Civic Action

## Advocacy *(Our advocacy seeks to influence public policy toward justice for all that God has created)*



Advocacy, as defined by the dictionary, is “to speak or plead on behalf of another.” We ourselves are beneficiaries of advocacy. Jesus is our advocate (1 John 2:1), as is the Holy Spirit (John 14:26).

Throughout history, we see examples of God’s people acting as advocates by calling upon their leaders to act justly and protect the most vulnerable. Moses was an advocate for his people with Pharaoh, who was the most powerful political leader of his day. The Old Testament prophets were consistent advocates as they called the leaders and the people back to right relationship with God, which includes seeking justice.

Motivated by God’s love for us, we carry on that tradition. We can share a vision of the world as God wants it to be and help shape the laws and policies that define how we live together in God’s world. We can contact our leaders and lift our voices with, and for, those whose voice is not usually heard in the halls of power. Advocacy is an extension of the church’s practice of loving our neighbors and being good stewards of God’s creation.

## Justice in the Bible

Did you know that the words for justice and righteousness in many languages are the same? They refer to right relationship – right relationship with God (righteousness) and right relationship with others, between nations, and among all that God has created (justice). Unfortunately, in English we have frequently lost the sense that those two words are intricately intertwined. We also forget when we read those words that we are supposed to be thinking about what needs to happen to restore relationships with God and with others. Keep that in mind as you write your letters about issues and policies. How can these policies help restore right order in God’s world?

## Prayer

Gracious God, thank you for loving the world so very deeply. Help us to see the brokenness that now mars what you created as perfect, and the struggles of people you created in your image. Help us to reflect your love by loving and serving our neighbors and our vulnerable planet. Please help us be your advocacy ambassadors, bravely lifting our voices with, and for, those whose wellbeing is threatened. Give us the right words to share with our leaders, so that they, too, may see and hear and understand the brokenness, as well as how you are calling them to respond. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

# What is Needed for a Good Advocacy Letter?



As you try to get the attention of your legislators, you’ll want to **use your own words** and **personalize** your letter as much as possible. They want to know what YOU think. **Notecards** or **stationery** can make the letter feel even more personal. A simple personalized letter, note, or email is usually worth more than hundreds of form letters. Contact Lutheran Advocacy-MN for updates and bill numbers (as available) or check the website for additional resources. **\*\*[Who Represents Me? <https://www.gis.lcc.mn.gov/iMaps/districts/>]\*\***

## A good letter will also include the following elements:

- 1) Your Name & Address on Envelope & Letter:** Legislators want to know that you are their constituent and where you live (or where you go to church, if you are writing to the legislator from that district).
- 2) Who You Are:** Mention something about yourself, like what church you are from, and if you have first-hand experience with the issue.
- 3) Ask for Specific Action:** “Please support...” If there is a bill number, this is the place to include it.
- 4) Give a Reason or Say Something About Why You Care:** Speak from your heart, elaborate from the talking points, or tell a story.

## Mail the letters to these addresses:

Sen. \_\_\_\_\_, Minnesota State Senate, MN Senate Building, 95 University Ave. W., St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. \_\_\_\_\_, Minnesota House of Representatives, 100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55155

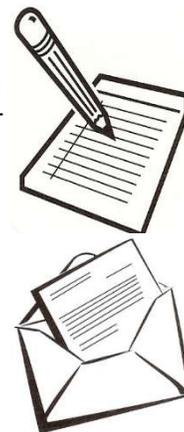
# Many Ways to Make an Impact

**Find your Minnesota legislator:** <https://www.gis.lcc.mn.gov/iMaps/districts/>  
**Find Minnesota Legislative Committee Members:** <leg.mn.gov/leg/committees>

## Letters to Legislators *(including email letters)*

**We need you** – your **congregation, campus, youth group, confirmation class, WELCA group, church committee**, or whatever – **to be in contact with your Minnesota state representative and senator!** Letter-writing is one of the **most accessible ways for many people to participate** in advocacy action. Letter campaigns begin to create relationships with legislators, and it is in relationship with their constituents that our legislators know what we care about, and why.

Letters can be written during a special time in worship, before or after a meal, as part of a forum or in small groups. It is effective to collect the letters as an offering to God, and to pray that legislators will be moved by them. Remember that we do this as part of our faith, acting as God's advocacy ambassadors for love of neighbor and creation. Notecards, rather than big impersonal pieces of paper, help make the letters/notes feel more personal to the legislator and assist in the relationship-building process. **Use the following pages, which can be printed back-to-back by issue, to organize letter offerings with your group.** Or send the pages out in advance and encourage people to bring their letters to your next meeting or gathering to dedicate them jointly.



## Phone Calls & Emails



When **events are unfolding quickly**, phone calls to legislators are an easy and effective way to take action. With a couple days leeway, emails can also be a quick way to reach legislators. Lutheran Advocacy-MN provides **Action Alerts** that include the **Action requested**, the **Main Message**, and various **Talking Points**. The caller (or emailer) is encouraged to choose one or two points or share briefly why they care about the issue. Usually, a message can be left with a staff person. Ask them to record your contact information and tell them you want to know later what the legislator did on the issue; instead of just being a "for" or "against" mark in their tally, the communication may have more of an impact.

## Meetings with Lawmakers *(in-person or virtual)*

**Magnify the impact of letters or emails** by arranging a group visit with your legislator(s). Our leaders want to hear from us and they rely on us to help inform them on issues that are pertinent to their districts. Constituent visits have been identified as the **single most influential way to make a difference** on an issue. When it is possible to refer to several previously written letters and emails by your group, the visit is even more powerful.



## Letters to the Editor

If you can write a letter to your legislators, you can also write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. Tie your comments to a recent article. Letters to the editor need to be very short and concise—no more than 200-300 words. The first sentence should engage readers immediately.



## Social Media

Tagging legislators on Facebook, Instagram, Threads, Blue Sky, or other platforms can be a good way to get their attention. Also, thank you messages can be helpful in relationship building. Photos of a person with a brief, specific action or message written on a whiteboard can be a very effective post – be sure to include your first name, last initial, and the community you're from.

## Thank Legislators

Most important – Don't Forget to thank legislators when they support the position you advocate, or if they take time to meet with you and your group. This helps build relationships!