

## **Contacting your State Legislator**

*By Larry Alferink*

The following advice is based on information provided by the State Universities Annuitants Association.

### **Fundamental “Dos”**

- Specifically ask for support of your position
- Address your legislator properly
- Write legibly (handwritten letters are fine if they are readable)
- Be brief, to the point, and discuss only one issue in each letter
- If possible, give an example of how the issue affects you personally. Use your own words and your own stationery
- Include your address and sign your name legibly
- Ask the legislator to explain his/her position in their reply
- Write your legislator when they do something of which you approve, not just when you are against something

### **Fundamental “Don’ts”**

- Do not send a postcard
- Do not sign and send a form letter.
- Do not begin on a righteous note (“as a citizen and a taxpayer” and/or “as a concerned citizen”)
- Do not apologize for writing and taking their time. If your letter is short and expresses an opinion, they are happy to give it consideration
- Do not be rude or threatening.
- Do not send a copy of your letter to other legislators; write each one individually
- If you choose to e-mail a legislator, do not use a university e-mail account

### **How to address letters**

When writing to a state senator, state representative, or the governor:  
The Honorable John Doe (or Jane Doe), State Senator, State Representative, or Governor (address).

### **For salutation:**

Dear Governor Rauner, Dear Senator, or Dear Representative.

### **Contact information for elected officials**

Contact information for legislators can be found at [www.legis.state.il.us](http://www.legis.state.il.us). Click on “Legislator Lookup” to search by your address or nine-digit zip code. You can also search for an individual name by using a search engine such as Google. Write the Senator/Representative for the district in which you live.