



Legislative Communications Regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic

In March 2020, a request for information was posted to the electronic discussion group of the Legislative Information and Communication Staff about how communications professionals are communicating with their members and constituents regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Shown below are the responses.

Arkansas House

The Arkansas House is resharing anything the Governor's Office or Department of Health send out on social media. We are also doing our own daily update with numbers updated from state Department of Health and two to four bullet points informing them of the newest info available. Our graphic designer changes the update based on what our chief information officer approves of top headlines. We as a team (four of us in the office) compile the information—an example is below from our website. That information is then also shared to members directly by email for them to share how want and we share via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. So far members have been posting to their own social media with great response as well.

<https://www.arkansashouse.org/news/post/7662/covid-19-response-update-for-march-17-2020>

Colorado General Assembly

The Colorado General Assembly has set up the following web page with COVID-19 resources:

<http://leg.colorado.gov/coronavirus>

Ohio House of Representative Democratic Caucus

In the Ohio House of Representatives Democratic Caucus, we have been sending around daily reminder emails in the morning of the most recent news headlines and also a reminder of any press conferences scheduled throughout the day and where to watch them online. Following the governor's daily press conferences, my team has been sending around recaps to our members and staff as quickly as possible that summarize the governor's briefings. This is an effort to make sure the caucus remains informed of the most up-to-date information and so we have a record of how this is evolving day to day.

Comms has created several social media toolkits for our members to post to their pages based on the information that is being circulated from the governor's office each day. I have attached a few examples of our graphics to this email. Additionally, I have frequently updated our talking points as this situation has evolved and shared the latest version with our members and staff. Our members and staff are fielding many questions from constituents all day every day, so talking points on the most recent information has been vitally important. In that same vein, we have created a Myth/Fact sheet for our members and staff to use that addresses some of the rumors that are circulating on

social media. Our primary focus is to keep the public informed with the most up-to-date, accurate information; as leaders in their local communities and in our state, our state reps are trusted messengers. We take that role very seriously.

We have put out several press releases this week that range from a variety of topics related to this crisis:

- [Leader Sykes, House Democrats Discuss Legislative Ideas and Constituent Concerns with Governor DeWine](#)
- [Leader Sykes Outlines Vote by Mail Proposal As State Continues To Battle COVID-19 Outbreak](#)
- [Leader Sykes: Secretary LaRose Is Creating More Chaos with Misinformation Campaign](#)
- [Leader Sykes: House Democrats Stand Ready to Clean Up This Election Mess](#)
- [Leader Sykes: We Never Should Have Arrived at This Point](#)
- [Leader Sykes: Ohioans Need Economic Relief Now, Legislature Needs to Act](#)
- [OLBC Sends Letter to Governor, Speaker and Senate President in Midst of Coronavirus Crisis](#)
- [Sobecki Files Bill to Allow Public Bodies to Meet Remotely During States of Emergency](#)
- [Representative Lepore-Hagan Pushes Governor to Fund Emergency Benefits for Ohio Workers Affected by Coronavirus Outbreak](#)
- [Representative Leland to Introduce Legislation Preventing Utility Service Cuts or Eviction During the COVID-19 Crisis](#)

Our shop has drafted templates for our offices to personalize and use such as:

- PSA script on coronavirus.
- E-newsletter template members can send to constituents with most up-to-date information.
- Press release templates to personalize with district-specific information.
- Social media ideas to show support for social distancing efforts and creative ways to reach constituents online.

South Carolina Senate Republicans

We have created a webpage (<https://scsenategop.com/covid19>) to provide updates as soon as new information is released, to hopefully provide a one-stop shop with real-time updates.

We found that our members were getting questions that touched many different agencies and issues: insurance, small business, unemployment, testing, supplies, etc. A daily report was not timely and referring to many different sites wasn't prudent. The comprehensive webpage helps address many of those questions on one page.

Our members are sharing this info on their social, their own websites, in email correspondence and staff are referring to it for information. We are out of session for at least next week and are working on putting together Facebook Live Q&As to show we are still visible and accessible to the public.



Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Legislative Action Report

scsenategop.com

Outbreaks of Coronavirus (COVID-19) are public health concerns. Read SC Senate Republicans latest update on preventing the spread in South Carolina.

Utah Senate

The Utah Senate is providing daily updates as new information/resources become available and directing individuals to coronavirus.utah.gov/.

Senate of Virginia

We are sharing any info from the Governor's Office, Department of Health, secretary of Health and Human Resources and directly with members and staff for use as needed. We have closed the capitol for tours and the public until March 30th. We have split our office staff into two teams with alternating workdays. Everyone has means of telecommuting.

Washington D.C. Council

We are sending out information via all 13 councilmembers' email list servs and social media accounts. Our local agencies have also provided information on how they plan to deliver services to residents and we are making that information public as well. Local news outlets have also been very helpful in sharing information. All city hall staffers are working from home and any mandatory votes taking place during the crisis will take place virtually. All other legislative meetings and regular activities have been postponed until further notice.

Washington State House Democrats

The Washington state House Democrats have set up a COVID-19 resources page for both members and the public:

<https://housedemocrats.wa.gov/covid-19>

Washington State House Republicans

We have created a Coronavirus hub with more than 100 links to local, state and federal information and resources:

<http://houserepublicans.wa.gov/2020/03/16/coronavirus/>

Some of our members have been sending out email updates with a link to the page above, while others have included every link on the page in their update.

West Virginia Senate

The central spot for information in our state is through the executive and Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR)— <https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>. I've been encouraging our members to use that as a source of information to keep both themselves current

on the situation as it changes, and also to share the information with their constituents as often as possible. I also provided them with the NCSL website, because with so many members who are serve border counties, they often get questions about what our neighboring states are doing.

And we have been tweeting and putting inks on Facebook through the legislature's official accounts from the DHHR and executive branch as this unfolds.