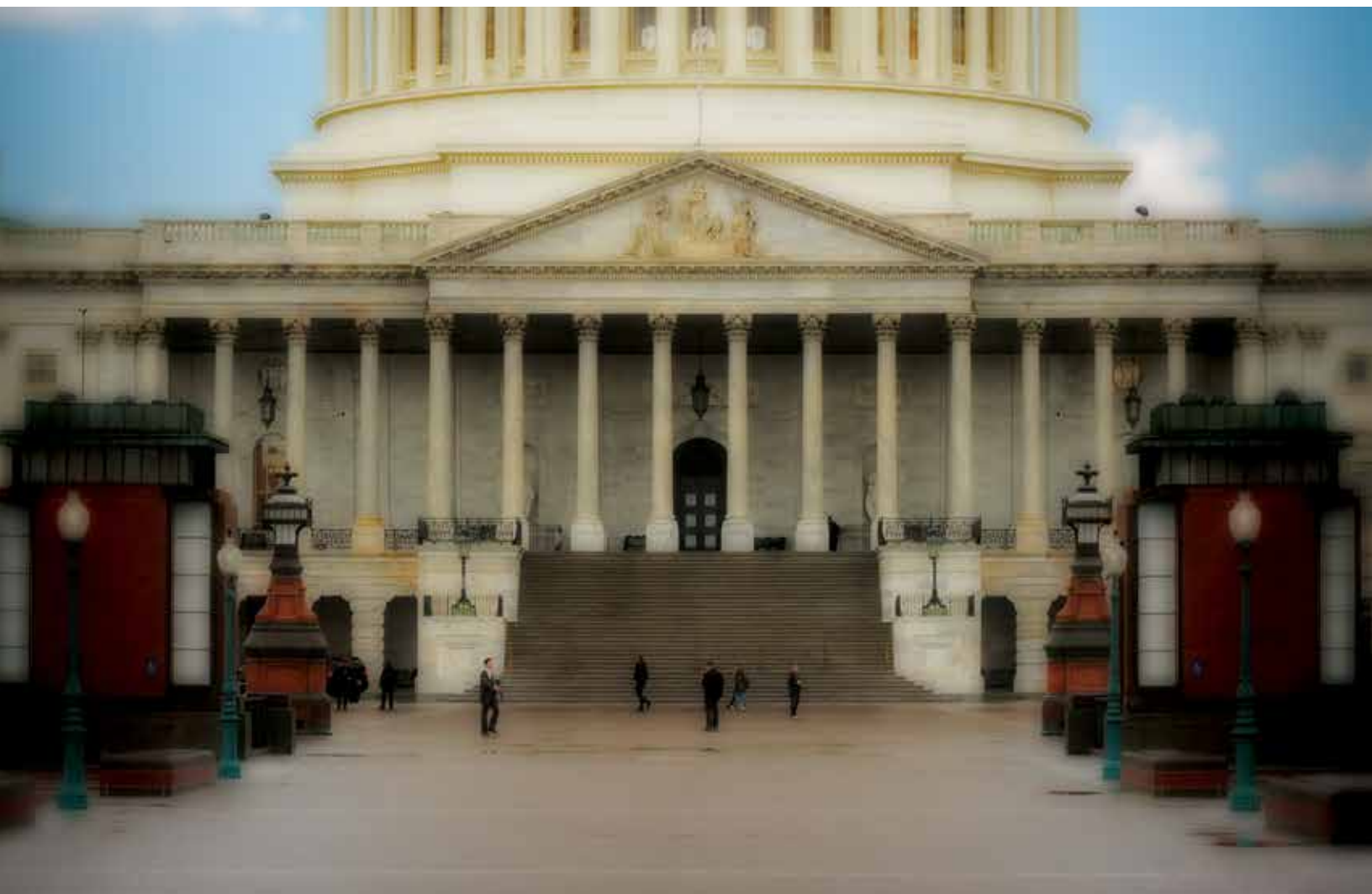




NACS GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

# Grassroots Guide

Easy Actions to Influence Lawmakers for a Stronger Industry





*You have a powerful voice in shaping the outcome of legislation that affects our industry and your business.*

*Contacting your legislator just once per quarter puts you in the very top percentage of those who communicate with their legislators.*

# Grassroots Guide

## Contact Your Members of Congress

**In Grassroots, Numbers Count.** Build relationships and make your voice heard! Members of Congress want to hear from their constituents. Legislators often base voting decisions on feedback they receive from voters back home. The more individuals who contact a legislator on any given issue, the more seriously the member of Congress will take interest in it. Some offices actually tally how many phone calls, emails and letters they receive for or against an issue.

There are several simple ways to make your voice heard:

- 
- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| <b>1. Communicate with Legislators through the NACS Grassroots Website</b> | page 2  |
| <b>2. Writing Your Own Letter to Members of Congress</b>                   | page 6  |
| <b>3. Call Your Legislator</b>   | page 7  |
| <b>4. Schedule an In-district Meeting</b>                                  | page 8  |
| <b>5. Take Action</b>  | page 11 |
-



# Communicate with Legislators through the NACS Grassroots Website [nacsonline.com/grassroots](http://nacsonline.com/grassroots)

Due to heightened security measures, correspondence sent by traditional mail can take up to three weeks to be delivered. Today, more and more citizens are using emails and faxes to communicate their concerns, and elected officials' offices increasingly prefer electronic communications for constituent contact.

The NACS Grassroots website helps you effectively communicate with your legislators. When you use our website to communicate, NACS can track correspondence from our industry to Capitol Hill, which allows us to know about the relationships you are developing and hold legislators accountable to their retail constituents.

To make communication easy, NACS has created ready-to-send, issue-specific letters that you can send to Congress. You can edit the standard letters to make them even more relevant by providing detailed information about your business and how an issue will affect you, your employees and your customers.

FIGURE 1  
[nacsonline.com/grassroots](http://nacsonline.com/grassroots)  
**ACTIVE ISSUES** area

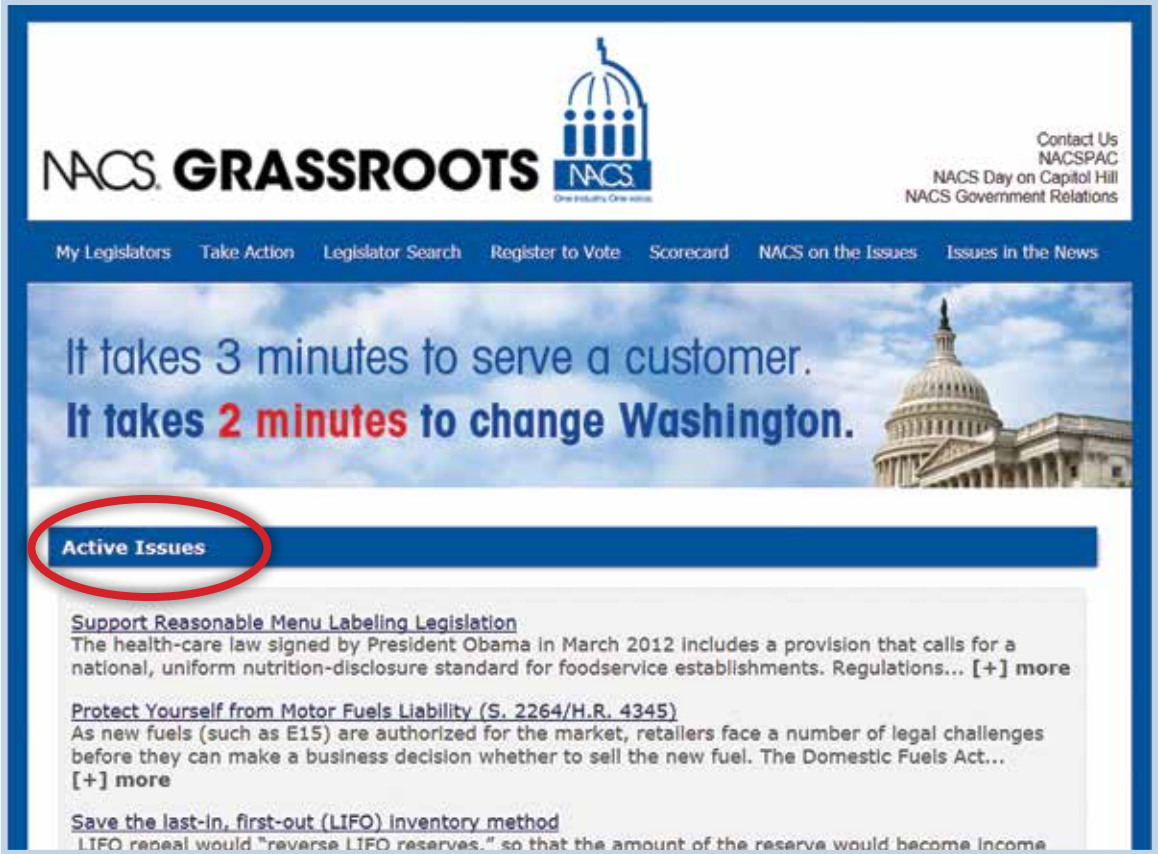


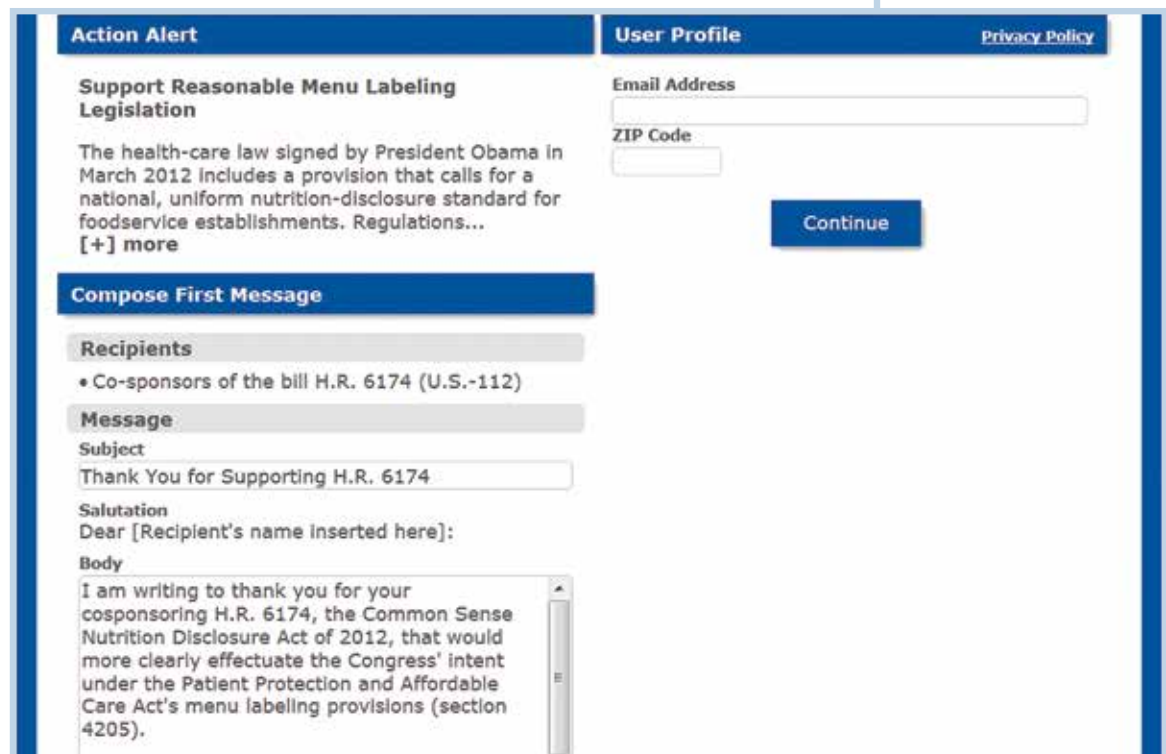
FIGURE 2  
Click on an issue title  
or on "more"



The NACS grassroots website asks that you complete a user profile the first time you visit; if you have cookies enabled on your computer, the system will remember you when you return. If you are a returning user, you'll be taken to a QUICK LOGIN page where you'll enter your email & zip code.

- Go to [nacsonline.com/grassroots](http://nacsonline.com/grassroots).
- There, you'll view ACTIVE ISSUES. [FIGURE 1]
- Click on an issue title or (more) [FIGURE 2] to be taken to COMPOSE MESSAGE. [FIGURE 3]

FIGURE 3  
COMPOSE MESSAGE  
window



The grassroots system identifies your members of Congress based on your business address (required) and your home address (optional). If you have stores in numerous districts, you may edit your business address.

- Click MY LEGISLATORS. You'll be taken to USER PROFILE.
- Enter your email & zip code.
- Update BUSINESS INFORMATION to reflect store location(s). [FIGURE 4]

FIGURE 4  
**Update BUSINESS INFORMATION to reflect store location(s).**

The screenshot shows a web form for updating user information. At the top, there are fields for 'Phone' and 'Fax'. Below that is a dropdown for 'OrganizationType'. The form is divided into sections: 'Home Information' and 'Business Information'. The 'Business Information' section is highlighted with a red border. It contains fields for 'Your Title' (Owner), 'Company' (Red Slipper Convenience Store), 'Street Address' (5342 Yellow Brick Road), 'City' (Green City), 'State' (KS), and 'Zip' (22345). Below the form are two checked checkboxes: 'I want to receive future alerts' and 'Remember me (Uncheck on shared computers)'. A blue 'Continue' button is centered at the bottom. The footer includes 'The Association for Convenience and Fuel Retailing' and 'NACS 1600 Duke Street Alexandria, VA 22314'. The text 'Powered by voterVOICE' is visible in the bottom right corner of the form area.

Locating Your Legislators Contact Info

- Click MY LEGISLATORS.
- Click PROFILE for the legislator for whom you wish to see contact information. [FIGURE 5]
- Here you'll see Washington, D.C. ("Capitol") and district contact info. [FIGURE 6]

FIGURE 5  
**In MY LEGISLATORS,**  
 click **PROFILE** for the  
 legislator for whom  
 you wish to see  
 contact information.

**Directory**

**Your Federal Elected Officials [-] hide**


<input type="checkbox"/> President Barack Obama	<a href="#">Profile</a>
<input type="checkbox"/> Vice President Joe Biden	<a href="#">Profile</a>
<input type="checkbox"/> Senator Jim Webb	<a href="#">Profile</a>
<input type="checkbox"/> Senator Mark Warner	<a href="#">Profile</a>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Representative Jim Moran	<a href="#">Profile</a>
<input type="checkbox"/> Representative Frank Wolf	<a href="#">Profile</a>

**Your State Elected Officials [-] hide**

<input type="checkbox"/> Governor Bob McDonnell	<a href="#">Profile</a>
<input type="checkbox"/> Lt. Governor Bill Bolling	<a href="#">Profile</a>
<input type="checkbox"/> Secretary of the Commonwealth Janet Polarek	<a href="#">Profile</a>
<input type="checkbox"/> Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli II	<a href="#">Profile</a>
<input type="checkbox"/> Senator Adam Ebbin	<a href="#">Profile</a>

FIGURE 6  
**Example contact info.**

**Representative Jim Moran (D-VA)** X



**Contact Information**

Capitol Address	2239 Rayburn Building Washington, DC 20515-4608
Capitol Phone	(202) 225-4376 <b>Call Your Legislator</b>
Capitol Fax	(202) 225-0017
District Address	333 N. Fairfax Alexandria, VA 22314
District Phone	(703) 971-4700 <b>Schedule In-District Meeting</b>
District Fax	(703) 922-9436
Web Site	<a href="http://moran.house.gov/">http://moran.house.gov/</a>

**Personal Information**

Religion	Roman Catholic
Date of Birth	5/16/1945
Home	Alexandria

**Background Information**

Education	BA Col. of Holy Cross (Wooster), 1967; MA U. of Pittsburgh, 1970
Occupation	Investment Banker



## Writing Your Own Letter to Members of Congress

If you wish to write your own letter, NACS recommends you follow these guidelines.

### Basic Correspondence Guidelines

- State your purpose for writing in the first sentence.
- If your correspondence pertains to a specific piece of legislation, identify it.
- Make sure you are referencing the correct legislation to the correct body of Congress. House bills are designated with H.R.###; Senate bills are designated by S.###.
- Address only one issue in each letter.
- Include personal interest information about why the issue matters to you.
- Be polite and thank the member of Congress for taking the time to read your correspondence.
- Close by clearly restating your purpose, your position and/or your request.
- Provide your contact information.

### How to Address Members of Congress in Correspondence

#### To your senator:

The Honorable (Full Name)  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
Dear Senator (Last Name):

#### To your representative:

The Honorable (Full Name)  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
Dear Representative (Last Name):



## Call Your Legislator

Phone calls are usually taken by a staff member.


- Identify yourself as a constituent. Identify the issue you are calling about.
- Request to be transferred to the chief of staff or legislative assistant who handles that issue.
- "Please tell Senator/Representative (Name) that I support/oppose issue XYZ." Or "Vote No on H.R. 814."
- State the reasons for your support or opposition. Ask for the legislator's position on the bill.
- Emphasize that you are a constituent and make sure to leave your full name and address so that you can be mailed a response.
- Advise NACS of your conversation. The NACS Government Relations team can enhance the effectiveness of your phone call by following up with the legislator's staff in Washington, D.C.



**Find your legislator's contact info at [nacsonline.com/grassroots](http://nacsonline.com/grassroots).**

See page 2 for more information.

**Representative Jim Moran (D-VA)** ✕



**Contact Information**

Capitol Address	2239 Rayburn Building Washington, DC 20515-4608
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**Personal Information**

Religion	Roman Catholic
Date of Birth	5/16/1945
Home	Alexandria



## Schedule an In-district Meeting

Meeting with your representative is a very effective way to lobby. Your member has a district office that they visit several times each month. Because of busy schedules, appointments may have to be scheduled weeks or even months in advance. A general rule of thumb is that members of Congress are in their D.C. offices Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and are in their home districts the remaining days.

You can contact the district office scheduler directly, using the district phone number or let NACS know you are interested in scheduling a meeting — we are more than happy to assist. NACS can provide you with an update on current issues, send a Government Relations team member to help facilitate the meeting and identify other NACS members in your district who may be politically active and interested in joining you.

### Prior to the meeting

- Re-familiarize yourself with the NACS legislative agenda.
- Visit the NACS Government Relations website at [nacsonline.com/GR](http://nacsonline.com/GR).
- Write down talking points to help emphasize core messages; contact the NACS Government Relations team for additional resources and guidance.
- When calling your legislator's district office to schedule a meeting, request to speak to the scheduler. Explain your purpose and the company you represent. This allows the legislator time to prepare and include a staff member who is responsible for the issue(s).
- Review your legislators voting record on key industry legislation and regulations.

FIGURE 7  
[nacsonline.com/  
grassroots](http://nacsonline.com/grassroots)  
SCORECARD link



FIGURE 8  
Click on the legislator of choice

### How They Voted

**Elected Official(s) for your home address:**

[U.S. Senator Webb \(D-VA-001\)](#)

[U.S. Senator Warner \(D-VA-002\)](#)

[U.S. Representative Wolf \(R-VA-010\)](#)

**Elected Official(s) for your business address:**

[U.S. Senator Webb \(D-VA-001\)](#)

[U.S. Senator Warner \(D-VA-002\)](#)

[U.S. Representative Moran \(D-VA-008\)](#)

**View Other officials:**

[Click to view all State Officials](#)


[Click to view all Federal Officials](#)

### Locating Your Legislators Voting Record

- Click SCORECARD. [FIGURE 7]
- Click on the legislator of choice. [FIGURE 8]
- Review voting record. [FIGURE 9]

FIGURE 9  
Click on the legislator of choice

### Representative Jim Moran (D - VA-008)



Score : 31

[Contact Info](#)

[Back](#)

Result	Name of the Legislation	Vote	Score
Passed	<a href="#">H.Res. 203 House Resolution prohibiting EPA from issuing Greenhouse Gas regulations (4/6/2011)</a>	N	✘
Passed	<a href="#">H.R. 4348 House Passage of Highway bill, includes RYO tobacco legislation (6/29/2012)</a>	Y	✔
Passed	<a href="#">H.R. 8 Extension of 2001 and 2003 Bush tax cuts (8/1/2012)</a>	N	✘
Passed	<a href="#">H.R. 6079 Repeal "Obamacare" (7/11/2012)</a>	N	✘
Passed	<a href="#">H.R. 4367 Elimination of ATM Fee Disclosure Requirements (7/9/2012)</a>	Y	✔
Passed	<a href="#">H.R. 4 House Passage repealing IRS Form 1099 in health care law (3/3/2011)</a>	N	✘

Y : Voted Yes      N : Voted No      NV : Did not vote  
 ✔ : Voted with us      ✘ : Voted against us      NP : No position

Powered by voterVOICE

### **At the meeting**

- Be on time, but not too early.
- Be patient. It is not uncommon for a legislator to be late, or to have a meeting interrupted due to the member's crowded schedule. If interruptions do occur, be flexible.
- Be courteous. Smile and greet the legislator by name. Asking, "How are you?" after the initial hello helps to open up the dialogue. On the other hand, being abrasive is almost always counterproductive, and it provides the legislator with a good excuse to ignore your concerns. Thank the legislator for his or her time.
- Be organized. You should cover your position, the opposing argument and the reason your position is better for your business and the legislator's home district as a whole. Whenever possible, bring information and leave-behind materials supporting your position to the meeting.
- Be specific. Make a point to mention the bill by number and, whenever possible, demonstrate the connection between your request and the interests of the member's broader constituency. To help him or her understand, provide specific data or anecdotes about your business that are relevant to the issue you are discussing.
- Be accurate. To build a working relationship and get action, you need to be a credible source of information. If you don't know the answer to a question that you're asked, just say so. Take notes and let them know you'll get back to them. Contact NACS to help get the answer.
- Be a good listener. The legislator's comments and questions should provide insight into a strategy for materials or possible contacts to be included in a follow-up meeting.

### **After the meeting**

- Make sure that you get the names of any staff members who were helpful during your meeting. It is important to thank both the legislator and his or her staff.
- Thank your representative for listening to your concerns, especially if they he or she takes action. Commend them publicly, including writing letters to the editor or items in a newsletter. Be sure to share these with their staff.
- If you promised to provide an answer to a question you couldn't answer, be sure to follow through.
- **Advise NACS of your meeting.** The NACS Government Relations team can enhance the effectiveness of your meeting by following up with the legislator's staff in Washington, D.C.

## Take Action



Send a letter through [nacsonline.com/grassroots](http://nacsonline.com/grassroots).

- Click TAKE ACTION. [FIGURE 9]
- Here you'll see Active Issues.
- Click on an issue of interest. [FIGURE 10]

Here you'll see a ready-to-send letter that NACS has drafted for you. [FIGURE 11]

Feel free to customize the letter; it makes the letter more effective. We generate letters to legislators based on your business and home address...a bigger bang for the buck!

- Click SEND MESSAGE

There, you have just sent a letter to your legislator in Washington, D.C.

FIGURE 9  
Click on the TAKE ACTION link



FIGURE 10  
Choose an issue of interest

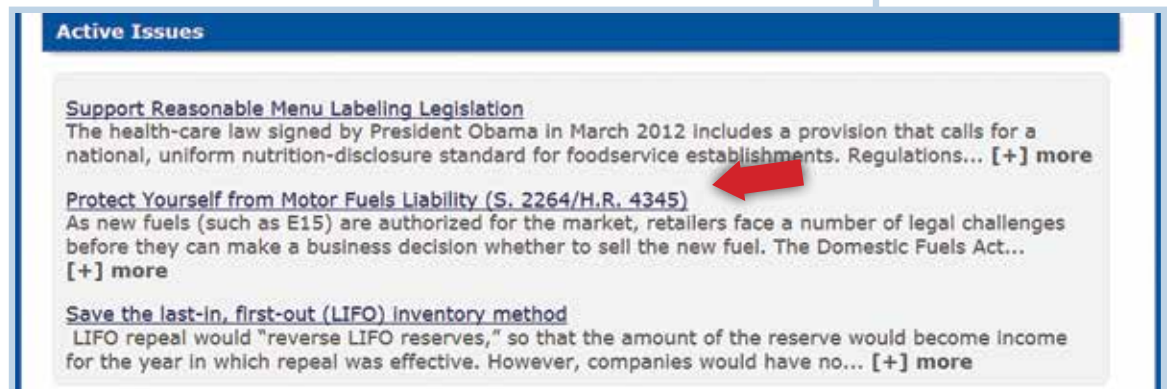


FIGURE 11  
A ready-to-send letter  
drafted by NACS

The screenshot displays a web interface with two main sections. The top section, titled 'Action Alert', features a blue header and contains the following text: 'Co-sponsor S. 2264/H.R. 4345', 'As new fuels (such as E15) are authorized for the market, retailers face a number of legal challenges before they can make a business decision whether to sell the new fuel. The Domestic Fuels Act...', and a '[+] more' link. The bottom section, titled 'Compose First Message', also has a blue header and includes a 'Recipients' list with one entry: 'Officials who did not sponsor/co-sponsor the bill S. 2264 (U.S.-112)'. Below this is a 'Message' form with fields for 'Subject' (filled with 'Co-Sponsor S. 2264 Domestic Fuels Act of 2012'), 'Salutation' (filled with 'Dear [Recipient's name inserted here]:'), and 'Body' (filled with 'I am writing to ask you to cosponsor S. 2264, the Domestic Fuels Act of 2012. As a fuels retailer, I want to be able to sell my customers the fuels they desire in a lawful and responsible manner. Unfortunately, current legal requirements inhibit my ability to offer new fuels without incurring substantial costs...'). To the right of the message form is a 'User Profile' section with a 'Privacy Policy' link, an 'Email Address' field, a 'ZIP Code' field, and a 'Continue' button.

### **Congressional Staff**

Developing a relationship with your legislator's staff — both in district offices and in Washington, D.C. — is beneficial to you and your company. The staff is responsible for handling the detailed work on issues. Legislators rely heavily on staff knowledge and expertise.

#### *Chief of Staff*

Some offices refer to the Chief of Staff as the Administrative Assistant. Members rely heavily on the opinions of their Chief of Staff, who is responsible for evaluating the political outcome of various legislative proposals and constituent requests. The Chief of Staff is in charge of the overall office operations, including hiring and firing, assignment of workload and supervision of key staff. This person reports directly to the member of Congress.

#### *Legislative Director (LD)*

The LD is sometimes referred to as the Policy Director. This staffer typically monitors the legislative schedule; he or she also makes recommendations regarding the pros and cons of a particular issue. The LD is often responsible for the issues most important to the legislator.

### *Legislative Assistant (LA)*

A legislative office has numerous LA's, each specializing in specific issues according to committee assignments or legislative categories. The LA is a policy expert and may draft speeches, position papers and brief the member on the pros and cons of specific legislations. This individual typically reports directly to the LD.

### *Legislative Correspondent (LC)*

The LC is usually responsible for drafting the legislator's responses to the numerous letters and phone calls received. He or she typically reports to the LD.

### *Scheduler*

This individual is in charge of allocating time for appointments, meetings and personal activities for the member. When trying to get in direct contact with a legislator, either by phone or in person, always ask to speak with the scheduler.

### *Press Secretary*

Sometimes referred to as Communications Director, the Press Secretary is responsible for media relations, speech writing and managing the public perception of the legislator. He or she is instrumental in arranging and managing press conferences and other public appearances.

### *Caseworker*

Many members of Congress have at least one caseworker in their district office. The caseworker's primary responsibility is to assist constituents with problems they may be having with federal agencies, such as OSHA, EPA, IRS and others.

### *Staff Assistant*

Typically the most junior member of the staff, the staff assistant is often a recent college graduate. Responsibilities include answering phones and opening mail.



## NACS GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Kelly Fink  
Director, Grassroots  
(703) 518-4228  
[kfink@nacsonline.com](mailto:kfink@nacsonline.com)