



Congressman Jared Polis

2ND District, Colorado | 4770 Baseline Road, Suite 220, Boulder, Colorado 80303

CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRIES

General Guidelines

Members and staff of the United States House of Representatives often assist constituents in dealing with federal agencies. The House Ethics Rules allow Members and staff to communicate with agencies on behalf of constituents in an effort to:

- Request information, initiate a legitimate inquiry or determine the status of a pertinent matter (*inquires may not be initiated if predicted upon speculation, suspicion, or if they lack foundation*);
- Urge prompt consideration based upon the merits of the case;
- Arrange for appointments;
- Request administrative consideration of a matter, or resolution thereof;
- Request reconsideration of an administrative decision if permitted by law, rule, or regulation.

Members and staff may not:

- Exert undue, a gratuitous or improper influence on agency officials.
- Circumvent agency rules or regulations or alter determinations;
- Make off-the-record comments to government officials concerning matters subject to formal agency proceedings (i.e. “ex-parte” communications with decision makers that are made without prior notice to all parties);
- Receive money or things of value (other than congressional salary) in return for, or as a result of, official assistance;
- Warrant the authenticity of facts, situations, allegations, or assertions with which they have no personal knowledge (*i.e. original knowledge of the truth or falsity in regard to particular facts or allegations*);

It is also important to note the following:

- Although constituents may provide appropriate documentation for their inquiries, providing such documentation in and of itself, does not assure favorable decisions by agencies;
- Members and staff may not assist constituents with matters that are either criminal or judicial in nature nor concerns that in any way involve past or pending litigation;
- Members and staff refer constituents with matters pertaining to state and local governments (Including State Prisons) to the appropriate state or local agency;
- Members and staff may not initiate inquiries with private entities;
- As a matter of congressional courtesy, Members and staff must refer inquiries from individuals outside of their congressional districts to the member of Congress who represents them;
- Members and staff must allow Federal agencies sufficient time to provide a thorough response to inquiries made on behalf of the constituents. Depending on the nature and complexity of the matter, responses to inquiries may take as long as one or two months.

These guidelines are general in nature. Given the varying complexity and unique aspects of certain inquiries, more specific guidelines may apply. Should you have any questions or need further clarification, please contact the District Office at (303) 484-9596.