



## **Making Our MSCA Voice Heard: Participating in the Legislative Process**

As MSCA members, we have the best knowledge about the essential programs and services school counselors provide to the youth of our state. This legislative session, it is necessary that we make our voice heard when important issues regarding our jobs and the work we do comes before the legislature in bills, ballot measures, initiatives, hearings, and other forms. As MSCA members, it is our duty to defend the programs and services so many Montanan youth depend on.

Let's be clear about what you can and cannot do as a public employee. Most importantly: **no one may retaliate against us based on our individual political beliefs or legislative advocacy work.**

1. Contact legislators or engage in legislative advocacy on **non-work** time. (breaks, lunch, before and after work) Be sure when communicating with legislators you clarify you are using your own time.
2. Contact legislators or engage in legislative advocacy using **non-work** resources. Call legislators using your personal phone, email account, and/or computer. Wear something other than your uniform during Zoom calls or in person testimony. Drive your personal car to hearings and copy flyers using your own resources.
3. While contacting legislators or engaging in legislative advocacy for your job as a MFPE member, you can speak for yourself and your position and talk about your experiences at work, but you may not speak on behalf of your whole unit, school district, college or university, bureau, division, or agency unless you have been given permission to do so by your employer.

Applicable laws and rules can be found in MCA 2-2-121, MCA 49-2-308, and in the State Employee Handbook in the Political Activity Section or in other local employee handbooks. If you have any questions, or if someone instructs you differently, refer them to these statutes and contact your union representative, or call 406-442-4250 ASAP.

Let's work together to advocate for our jobs, services, programs, and our state at the legislature.