



Tips for Writing Congress

A Well -Written Letter Has Impact!

People who think members of Congress pay little or no attention to constituent mail are plain wrong. Concise, well thought out personal letters are one of the most effective ways Americans have of influencing lawmakers. But, members of Congress get hundreds of letters and emails every day, so a personal letter that is clear and concise is what will be read and remembered.

ALWAYS

- ✓ Be courteous and respectful without "gushing"
- ✓ Address only a single topic or issue
- ✓ Introduce yourself and provide your contact information
- ✓ Clearly and simply state the purpose of your letter
- ✓ Keep your letter short – one page is best
- ✓ Use specific examples or evidence to support your position
- ✓ Close by stating what you want done or recommend a course of action
- ✓ Thank the member for taking the time to read your letter

IF YOU CAN

- ✓ Email your letter rather than sending it snail mail
- ✓ State any professional credentials or personal experience you have, especially those pertaining to the subject of your letter
- ✓ If a certain bill is involved, cite the correct title or number whenever possible
- ✓ Include a personal story explaining why the subject is important to YOU
- ✓ Connect your story the person you are writing – identify shared background, experience, etc...

NEVER

- ✓ Use vulgarity, profanity, or threats. Don't let your passion get in the way of making your point
- ✓ Fail to include your name and address, even in email letters
- ✓ Demand a response

Components of an Effective Letter

1. Elected official's contact information
2. Salutation
3. Introduction
4. Purpose of letter
5. Bill number and name, if applicable
6. Evidence and/or examples (i.e. data)
7. Personal story/connection
8. Requested action (i.e. support/reject)
9. Thank you
10. Personal Contact information (including City, State, Zip code)

See
*"Write Your Elected Officials"
for a sample*

Addressing Members of Congress

To Your Senator:
The Honorable (full name)
(Room #) (Name) Senate
Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

To Your Representative:
The Honorable (full name)
(Room #) (Name) House
Office Building
United States House of
Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator:

Dear Representative:

Cite these legislation identifiers when writing to members of Congress:

House Bills: "H.R. ____"
House Resolutions: "H.RES. ____"
House Joint Resolutions: "H.J.RES. ____"
Senate Bills: "S. ____"
Senate Resolutions: "S.RES. ____"