

How to Write to Elected Representatives

The great way to communicate in writing with your Members of Congress or any elected official is by email or by letter. You can do so directly from our site by using our [OCRWC](#) page to find online contact information for your elected officials. Keep your email/letter short and to the point.

Letter Tips:

Here are some important tips to keep in mind when drafting your letter:

- Use letterhead.
- Address the letter or email to a specific legislator. Make sure to verify the correct spelling of the legislator's name and use their correct title.
- Include your name and personal contact information, including your title, physical address, and email address.
- The subject line should state your brief position on the legislative issue or proposed bill. For example, "Oppose Bill XYZ," or "Support Bill XYZ."
- Keep it brief and concise. Aim for no longer than one page.
- Identify that you are the legislator's constituent if applicable.
- Identify the issue.
- If the issue is a particular bill, verify the full name and bill number and provide a short description of the bill.
- Communicate your issue and share the impact that it has on you personally.
- Share your profession and the community where you work and live.
- Support your argument concisely and make your strongest arguments in the beginning of the letter or email.
- Sign the letter personally.
- Mail the letter or send the email within a reasonable time frame so there is time for the legislator to read and to follow up with you.
- Make sure to respond and to follow up with any requests for information made by the legislator or their staff.

The first paragraph should include a greeting and a request for specific action to be taken by the legislator. In the next paragraphs, describe the bill, explain the legislation, and support your position. Always be positive in your rationale. To facilitate a response, ask how the legislator plans to vote on the issue and request a direct response.

Additionally, thank the legislator for their consideration and sign your name. Lastly, remember to respond to the legislator with any requests for information.

Email Tips

- Keep your email short and to the point.
- Do not mention multiple policy issues in the same email. Each email message is typically routed within the Congressional office to a staffer who handles a specific public policy portfolio, and you are more likely to receive a detailed response to a single request or topic.
- When using one of our sample letters, your message will get the attention it deserves if you take the time to personalize it with data or stories that reflect your experiences in your community. According to **research**, personalized messages to Congress have more influence on lawmakers' decision-making; identical form messages receive little to no attention.
- Do not use harsh or threatening language. Be thoughtful, straightforward, and clear.
- If you can't lobby, you can still educate. Rather than requesting support for legislation, consider concluding your message with an invitation to a site visit or a meeting to explain the issue further.
- Do not try to write to Representatives and Senators who do not represent you. It is a waste of effort. They have filters that automatically delete your emails.