

WRITE YOUR GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES ABOUT ISSUES THAT AFFECT YOU- A LETTER WRITER'S GUIDE

DO

- Write on your personal or business letterhead and sign your name over your typed signature at the end of your message.
- Be sure your return address is on the letter, not just the envelope.
- Limit your letter to one subject.
- Identify your subject clearly, by issue name, bill number or other information.
- State your reason for writing clearly- your own personal experience is your best supporting evidence. Explain how the issue will affect **you**.
- Be reasonable in your requests for action.
- Ask your legislator, council member or board member to state his position on the issue in his reply-as a constituent, you're entitled to know.
- Thank your legislator if they please you with their vote on an issue. Everybody appreciates a complimentary letter-and will remember it!

DON'T

- Use stereotype phrases and sentences that give the appearance of being "form letters." That reduces the impact and personal touch.
- Ask for the impossible. Don't threaten your legislator, because it will do more harm than good.
- Forget about the timing aspect of your letter. Try to send your views when an issue is still relevant and allows your legislator to take action on it.
- Pretend to wield vast political influence. Unsupported claims of political influence only cast doubt upon the views you express.
- Try to instruct your legislators on every issue that comes up. Each legislator has to consider all of his or her constituents and all of their points of view.

ADDRESS SALUTATIONS CLOSINGS

Federal Level

President

Dear Mr. President

Vice President

Dear Mr. Vice President

Senators

Dear Senator (Last Name)

Representatives

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. (Last Name)

STATE LEVEL

Governor

Dear Governor (Last Name)

Lieutenant Governor

Dear Lt. Governor

Senators

Dear Senator

Assembly Members

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. (Last Name)

County Level

Chairperson of the Board of Supervisors

Dear Chairperson (Last Name)

Supervisors

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms./ (Last Name) or Dear Supervisor (Last Name)

CITY LEVEL

Mayor

Dear Mayor (Last Name)

Council Members

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. (Last Name) or Dear Councilman/Chairperson (Last Name)

ADDRESSES

In addressing a letter, the rule is to always use "The Honorable (Last Name)" for all elected officials regardless of the level of government.

CLOSINGS

Sincerely yours,

Very truly yours,

Respectfully yours,