

TIPS FOR WRITING, SENDING AN E-MAIL, OR CALLING A LEGISLATOR

Writing a letter to a legislator

Use the proper salutation, for example:

The Honorable (first name) (last name)
Address
City, State, Zip code

Dear (Rep. / Sen.) (last name)

Be courteous and informative in your communication.

State the purpose of the letter in the opening sentence. If you are referring to a bill, include the bill number, author, and topic. If you live in the elected official's district, be sure to say this in the opening paragraph as well.

Personalize the letter by including examples of how the legislation might impact you and your students. Keep the letter brief – not more than one page.

Restate your request at the end of the letter, for example urging them to support or oppose the bill. Thank the legislator for his or her support and offer to address any questions that he or she might have. Be sure to include your contact information and sign the letter.

Sending e-mail communication to a legislator

The same guidelines apply to e-mail as to written letters. If you send an e-mail, send it directly to each representative. Do not copy other representatives or send a mass e-mail. Make it a brief message with no special layouts or graphics. Do not include attachments. Include your full name and address. Make it clear that you are a constituent and ask for a response. You might also want to send a hard copy of your e-mail to the legislator.

Phone calls to a legislator

State your name and address and identify yourself as the legislator's constituent. You will often be speaking with a secretary or aide. Briefly make known your position as they often keep track of the issues that people call about and report total numbers to the legislator. Have your thoughts organized in advance, which will help you to keep the call brief and to the point. It is also very helpful to share how the issue affects you personally. Thank them for their support.