

Writing to your Legislator

- Discuss one problem per letter.
This makes counting, filing and problem solving procedures easier. Don't list all your personal woes. Be brief and to the point. No long stories - keep to one subject.
- Include pertinent information.
Include your full name and address (unless you need to maintain anonymity).
Include a daytime phone.
- Don't ask for the moon.
Make reasonable requests based on specific goals.
- Identify the issue.
Give the number of the bill or the name of the legislation. Be specific about an issue. Legislators are involved in dozens of issues under the general topics of taxes, government spending, unemployment, etc. The more specific you can be the more specific the legislator's reply will be.
- Explain your expertise.
If you have a professional expertise or specialized knowledge, by all means share it. As a massage therapist you have something special to say and you have become "expert" in that area.
- Time your letter.
If possible, send your letter to coincide with the introduction of a bill into committee or on the floor of the legislative body.
- Give Praise where it's due.
A legislator's favorite letters? One that offers a thank you or a pat on the back. When politicians are running for office, they get plenty of applause, but in the real life of politics, they are constantly in uncomfortable situations. They can't make everyone happy all the time. So, like everyone else, they like to hear deserved praise. A vote of confidence also gives them valuable feedback, especially on touchy issues.
Remember that "con" forces tend to be more vocal than "pro" forces.

Special Tips

- Write legibly and clearly. Type your letter if at all possible. Remember that your letter is your image of yourself.
- Personal letters get personal responses; form letters get form responses.
- If your problem is urgent, mark the envelope "urgent".
- For real emergencies, send a telegram or a mailgram. You'll get quicker attention.
- Be sure to include your daytime telephone number in your letter. A staff member may need to reach you to get additional information.

Special Note

- A State or U.S. Senator is addressed "Dear Senator Doe".
- A U.S. Representative as "Dear Congressman or Congresswomen Doe".
- A State Representative as "Dear Representative Doe".
- All are also addressed "The Honorable Joe Doe".