



# A Brief Guide to Writing Your Member(s) of Congress

Personalized letters, whether sent via email or handwritten and mailed, are one of the best ways to impact your Members of Congress. Sometimes, they'll even bring letters from their constituents to the floor of Congress and read them aloud.

Different congressional offices weigh the importance of various types of constituent contacts differently, but a good rule of thumb is the more effort that goes into your contact, the more weight it is given. That means handwritten letters can be the best option, but they can also take longer to reach the offices because they go through a rigorous screening process, so if you're writing your member of Congress about an upcoming vote or another urgent issue, email may be a better choice.

Some tips for writing a strong, compelling letter or email:

- Be formal. Date the top of the letter and use the Senator's or Representative's full name and title, i.e. *Dear Senator Dianne Feinstein*. At the end of the letter, close with separate lines for *Sincerely*, *your signature*, *your full name*, and *your full address* (so they know you're really a constituent).
- Introduce yourself as a constituent. If you voted for them, contributed to their campaign, or are writing on behalf of a group or organization, let them know.
- Write your position on the issue you're addressing, and what you want your Member of Congress to do about it.
- Include facts to substantiate your position. If you're writing an email, you can link to credible sources that backup your position.
- Write something about why this issue is so important to you. If you can think of one, include a personal anecdote or story that explains why it matters to you.
- Reiterate what you're asking them to do, in more specific terms if needed than at the beginning of the letter.