

Writing to a Member of Congress



One of the best ways to communicate with a Member of Congress is through a well-reasoned personal letter. Your correspondence will be more effective if you follow these guidelines:

Timing is important! A letter sent after Congress acts is a missed opportunity, while correspondence sent months before an issue is considered may be forgotten.

Limit your letter to one page and to one subject. Avoid programmatic jargon. In the first paragraph, explain your reason for writing. Briefly describe your credentials, and include other pertinent information. As necessary, note that these are your own views rather than those of your employer.

In the second paragraph, describe the importance of the issue. Cite relevant facts and avoid emotionalism. Frame your discussion from a national, rather than a personal, perspective.

In the third and concluding paragraph, request (do not demand) a specific action. Thank the Member for his or her consideration of your views. Offer assistance.

Consider enclosing one or more copies of newspaper articles about your Foster Grandparent, RSVP and Senior Companion volunteers and personal stories illustrating the impact of their service in the Member's home district.

Ensure that your letter includes your name, address, and telephone number. Use electronic mail or fax – or ask your legislator's office which they prefer. After you fax/e-mail your letter, call the legislator's office and inform them it has been sent.

For information on your Member of Congress:

- [Senate <http://www.senate.gov>](http://www.senate.gov)
- [House <http://www.house.gov>](http://www.house.gov)

Correct address styles:

The Honorable _____
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable _____
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator _____

Dear Representative _____