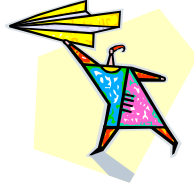


## Your Letter Goes to Washington:



### The Real-Life Adventures of Your Words on Paper

Do you ever wonder what happens to the letters, e-mails and faxes to your Senators and Representatives! Does anyone ever read them? Does anyone really care about your thoughts and opinions? As a Foster Grandparent, RSVP, Senior Companion project director, volunteer or friend of Senior Corps programs, there are some things you should know.

Here's the real deal about what happens after you click "SEND" or your letter slides its way through the fax machine and on to Washington, D.C.

- Legislators rely on their constituents (people who live in their district in their home state) to educate them about issues that are important.
- Letters, faxes and e-mails are a critical part of the democratic process.
- Two ways to make your voice heard and educate your Member of Congress:
  - Vote for a candidate.
  - Express your opinion.
- Letters addressed to Representative and Senators are most often read first by their Staffers. Staffers are important people who know their legislator's schedule, agenda and most important issues of concern at the time.
- Legislators' offices keep a tally of each and every letter, fax and e-mail they receive. When it comes time for members of Congress to vote on a particular bill or discuss a certain issue, legislators take note of correspondence they have received from their constituents.
- What should you write about?

In SHORT:

Who are you?  
What do you do?  
How do you do it?



Or the LONGER version:

- What kinds of things do you do when you volunteer?
  - What are the benefits to you when you volunteer? How has your life improved?
  - What are the benefits to the people you serve when you volunteer? How do you think their lives have improved?
  - Do you have a special story to share about your service as a volunteer?
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- Some things are NOT important such as spelling, grammar and handwriting. We are a diverse group of people with different levels of education and backgrounds. Some of our letters may be in different languages. Some of us have disabilities that affect our handwriting. You may be artistic and prefer to draw a picture of what you do or you may have a photograph of you and the children or adults you serve. You may want to ask someone else to write down your words for you in a letter.
  - Please help all Senior Corps programs by writing letters to your U.S. Representatives and Senators to educate them about the important service you provide in your community.
  - Without a doubt – sharing your thoughts and opinions through letters, e-mails and faxes is one of the most important ways to be a part of the democratic process and assure that Senior Corps programs will continue to grow and help people in your home community.
  - Remember: Letters to Washington should only be sent by fax or e-mail due to security. Hand-written letters can be mailed to NSCA (email [info@nscatogether.org](mailto:info@nscatogether.org) for more information) to be hand-delivered when the board meets in Washington at least twice each year and at other selected times. This is a great way for Board members to be able to talk with more legislators who are not from their particular home state. Delivering letters also provides an opportunity for our Washington Representative to introduce our programs to returning and new members of Congress.

Created by the National Senior Corps Association (NSCA) Legislative Committee, 2008. NSCA advocates for Foster Grandparent, RSVP and Senior Companion programs nationwide. For more information about NSCA or to become a member, visit our website: [www.nscatogether.org](http://www.nscatogether.org)