

Tips for Writing a Letter or Email to a Legislator:

Constituent letters are an extremely effective advocacy tool. Your letter should be simple and direct. Ideally, it should not be more than one page since short letters tend to have the greatest impact. It should only address one issue and you want to be very clear about your position and request. You can always use WOCN's website to construct letters to your legislators, but another option is to send an email to your legislator and/or their staff using personalized letters on your stationary which are in PDF form and attached to email. Attaching PDF'd letters is more effective and timely than sending letters through the mail.

Sending an Email

Email is an easy way to communicate with a legislator or staff member.

- If possible, **try to secure an email address of a particular staff member** (the health Legislative Aide or the District Office Director) and email him/her directly. This is highly effective.
- Use WOCN website to contact your members for orchestrated alerts.

State key information in the subject line.

- As it is easy to erase email, you want to communicate key information in the subject line.
- State that you are a constituent and reiterate the issue in the subject line (e.g., "Your constituent writing about _____ legislation").

Keep your message brief and to the point.

- Do not forget your name and address in the text.
- Embed your message in the text. Attachments should be for background information, fact sheets, or endorsements.

Writing a Formal Letter

1. Opening Paragraph
 - Introduce yourself as a constituent and how you are connected to the district.
 - Thank the legislator for any past support that is applicable.
 - State the purpose for your contacting the legislator. If applicable, reference a specific bill number.
2. State the Facts
 - Back up your position with facts.
 - Provide information showing the impact of legislation on your practice/facility or on the legislator's district and constituents.
3. Explain Consequences
 - Provide information on the impact of opposing your request.

- Explain the impact on your community.
- 4. Ask for a Response
 - Restate your position.
 - Ask for a response.
- 5. Close the Letter
 - Be sure to provide your contact information.
 - If applicable, include a professional or organizational affiliation so the legislator sees that you are connected to the larger community.

Proper Heading for Formal Letters to Members of Congress:

To a Senator

The Honorable (Full Name)
United States Senate
(Room Number; Building Name) Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator (Last Name):

To a Representative

The Honorable (Full Name)
House of Representatives
(Room Number; Building Name) House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative (Last Name):