



RURAL NEIGHBORHOODS

TIPS FOR WRITING A LETTER TO YOUR LEGISLATOR

Effective letters are a way to influence your Federal or State Legislator. Personalized letters are well received by elected officials. They know it takes time to write a letter with a well-thought out message.

Before Writing the Letter:

If you need to find out the Members of Congress are in your area go to www.senate.gov and www.house.gov and enter your zip code to see who represents you. On these websites you will find links to your Members of Congress' websites where you can obtain contact information. You can also call Congress at (202) 224-3121 and ask to be connected with your Member's Congressional Office. That office can provide you with local contact information. Use www.congress.org to find your Governor and State Legislators.

- ✓ Read about and research the issue. It is also important illustrate the local and state impact. Tell them about people impacted or other information on how it impacts the area your elected official represents.

Addressing the Letter:

If you are writing to a Member of Congress, use the following format to address the letter and envelope:

- The Honorable _____
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
- The Honorable _____
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Writing the Letter:

- ✓ Keep the letter to one page.
- ✓ In the first paragraph, immediately identify yourself including who you are and the city that you live in. It is very important that the elected official know that you are their constituent
- ✓ In the first paragraph, state the issue that the letter addresses. If it is a specific bill, identify it by name and number if possible, HR 1234 or S. 6789. Remember, it's okay if you don't know it – still write the letter!
- ✓ Focus on the main points.
- ✓ Express the appropriate conviction and emotion in your letter to personalize and add strength to its content. Tell why this issue is important to you, your family, your community or your state.
- ✓ Tell the elected official the action you want them to take. Remind them it will affect how you will vote in future elections.
- ✓ Ask for a reply. Make a request to tell you how he or she will address the issue. Of course -- include your full name and address.

Following Up the Letter:

- ✓ Please help Rural Neighborhoods obtain accurate information about your Member of Congress as possible by sending us a copy of your letter or completing an **I Took Action Form** located on our website www.RuralNeighborhood.org at Tool for Advocates.